

MOLIÈRE AS JULIUS CÆSAR

From a painting by Nicholas Mignard

Great Plays

(French and German)

By

Corneille, Molière, Racine, Lessing, Schiller, and Hugo

With Biographical Notes and a Critical Introduction by Brander Matthews

Illustrated



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FRENCH AND GERMAN DRAMA

THE Greeks are the only people who have developed a really great drama of their own, wholly uninfluenced by any authority beyond the borders of their own race. Out of the loosely knit rhapsody of the Dionysiac revellers they evolved the perfect form of the tragedy of Sophocles, with its lyric passages subordinated to the essential drama. Out of the make-believe and horse-play of a village festival they were able to rise to the comedy of Menander. The drama of the Latins, tragic or comic, was an imitation of the Greek. The drama as we have it now in the various modern languages of Europe has been evolved from primitive and popular elements very like those which served as the basis of Greek development; but the modern evolution has not been as independent as that of the Greeks, since they had no model to guide them, and were forced to feel their own way toward perfection, whereas the moderns ever since the Renascence have had the Greek drama, if not as an avowed model, at least as a most helpful standard of comparison.

The history of the modern drama is the record of the incessant effort made by scholars and men of letters to impose rules derived from a study of the Greek drama upon the popular theatre, which has been spontaneously developed by the unlearned, who knew nothing about the great Greeks, and who were hard at work trying to improve a primitive form—just as the Greeks themselves had striven to do when they were but beginners. And the relative value of the dramatic literature of each of the modern languages is proportionate to the completeness of the fusion that took place between the primitive

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and popular play on the one hand, and on the other the scholarly and artistic form favoured by those who upheld the Greek tradition. In Italy, for example, there was no fusion, the scholars despising the actual theatre of their own times and refusing to learn from it how a contemporary audience might be interested and moved to tears or to laughter; and as a result Italy had no outflowering of the drama; the acted plays are unliterary—the *commedie dell' arte* were even unwritten, which is the acme of the unliterary—and the literary attempts were unactable except by main strength. In England the fusion was perfect, although the scholars of the Elizabethan period did not perceive it; and the robust play with no pretence of art or literature, planned solely to please the groundlings that delighted in the gore and bombast of the tragedy-of-blood, was purified by slow degrees and transformed at last so that the public applauded "Macbeth" and "Othello," tragedies of lofty purpose, with a unity of conduct and a simplicity of theme essentially Greek, and with a heartiness and freedom characteristically English.

In Spain and in France the fusion took place, but it was not so well balanced as in England. In Spain the rougher popular elements predominated; and vigorous as Spanish dramatic literature unquestionably is, it lacks any specimen of the higher drama at all comparable with "Hamlet" or "Othello," and its merits are to be found in fertility of invention and ingenuity of intrigue, rather than in perfection of form or insight into humanity. In France the native drama yielded too readily to the attacks of the classical theorists, and in the resulting fusion the scholars seem to have got the better of the popular playwrights. In Italy the admirers of the ancient drama refused to pay any attention whatever to the theatre of their own day; whereas in France the upholders of the ancient methods went forward boldly and took possession of the stage, and imposed upon the future playwrights of France the observance of certain rules which the critics believed to have been laid down by Aristotle, and therefore to have the binding force of sacred laws.

The chief of these rules was that known as the Rule of the Three Unities—the unity of Action, the unity of Time, and the

unity of Place. The acceptance of this rule required that a play should have but a single story, that it should take place and be completed within a single day, and that it should be shown in a single scene. These rules were the result of the speculative spirit of Italian scholarship, but they were adopted eagerly in France and applied rigorously. They were supposed to be contained in Aristotle's treatise on Poetry, but only one of them is to be found there. Aristotle did declare that every work of art should have a single subject, a unity of theme; but he did not prescribe any limitations of either time or place; and the great Greek dramatists (from a study of whose masterpieces the great Greek critic deduced his precepts) have left us plays in which there are violations of these alleged unities of time and of place. From Italy and from France the theory of the three unities spread to England, only to be rejected by the stalwart common sense of the English poets. It spread to Spain also, but the playwrights there were frankly trying to please the populace. Lope de Vega tells us that when he sat down to write a play he locked up Plautus and Terence out of sight.

Why was it that the Rule of the Three Unities, rejected in Spain and England, was adopted in France? Partly can we account for this by the character of the French themselves, by their liking for law and order, by their willingness to have their actions regulated for them, by their inheritance of the Latin tradition. But there is another reason peculiar to France and calling for detailed consideration.

The modern drama has everywhere been developed out of the Passion-Play. At first the priests sought only to give to the ignorant people, gathered in church at Easter, a living picture of the central event of Christian history; but in time the passion-play expanded into a dramatic chronicle of Christ's whole life, from his birth to his death. This was acted outside the church. In England there were separate "pageants" (or, as we should call them nowadays, "floats") for each of the chief episodes, and these were taken one by one through the streets of the town, Coventry or York as it might be; but in France all the places were represented on the same long, shallow platform, the scenery suggesting at the extreme right of

vantes by his side, and he has Swift and Mark Twain at his heels.

The triumvirate of the French drama—Corneille, Molière, and Racine—were hailed as masters to be imitated, not in France alone and in the Latin countries, but also in England and in Germany. In England their influence bade fair for a little while to overcome that of the great Elizabethans; and in Germany, where there was no native drama to oppose to them, their supremacy was unquestioned. Even Voltaire, who was not primarily a playwright, although he achieved a certain measure of success on the stage by dint of wit, whereof he had more than his fair share—even Voltaire was allowed to rule the German theatre until Lessing wrote against him the "Hamburg Dramaturgy," perhaps the most acute analysis of the essential principles of the drama that had appeared since Aristotle's treatise. Lessing was a great critic—beyond all question the greatest critic of the eighteenth century; but he was not a born playwright any more than was Voltaire. That one or another of Lessing's plays still keeps the stage in Germany is due rather to the reputation of their author than to their own merits, although these are by no means inconsiderable.

What Lessing did was to disestablish the French tradition, to force his German contemporaries to think about the drama for themselves, and to open a way for Goethe and for Schiller. With Lessing the German drama asserts itself, and with Goethe and Schiller it proves itself. Of the two friends, Goethe was no doubt the broader genius, but Schiller was the more natural playwright. Goethe trod the stage like a conqueror, it is true; but Schiller breathed its air like a native. Scarcely a play of Goethe's is alive in the theatre to-day—except always the immortal "Faust"—while one or another of Schiller's bold and manly dramas is constantly in the repertory of the leading German playhouses.

After Voltaire the French poetic drama kept on tightening the bands in which it was swaddled until it choked the life out of itself at last. The revolt of the Romanticists against the pseudo-Classicists was made possible when the theories Voltaire had defended were formally overturned by Lessing. The plays of Goethe and of Schiller were translated into French, and so

were the plays of Shakespeare. The romantic poems of Byron swept over Europe, and were followed soon by the romantic novels of Scott, who derived a part of his inspiration from the German romantic movement immediately preceding his day. The old Classicist standards of the French were attacked on all sides; and they had been cast out of all the other European countries where they had been accepted, long before they were destroyed in France itself.

It was the young and ardent Victor Hugo who led the assault, setting forth his theories and indicating his plan of campaign in the famous preface to his unacted and unactable "Cromwell," and then in the acted "Hernani," proving his ability to practise what he preached and to body forth in concrete form what he had declared to be both desirable and necessary. By the side of Hugo fought the elder Dumas; and in the forefront of the battle were Alfred de Vigny, Alfred de Musset, and Théophile Gautier. Hugo followed "Hernani" with one play after another, some in prose and some in verse. In the prose plays the melodramatic skeleton is a little too barely displayed, but it is hidden in the verse plays where the splendid lyric fervour of the poet helps to cloak and conceal the artifices of the mere playwright. "Hernani" and "Ruy Blas" still hold their own in the French theatre; but most of the other Romanticist dramas have sunk out of sight. Not only has the realistic movement of which Balzac was the leader changed the public taste and made visible the emotional extravagance of the romantic school, but the calmer critics at the end of the nineteenth century have discovered that the work of the Romanticists was rather negative than positive; in other words, the Romanticists succeeded in destroying the formula of the Classicists, but they failed to win acceptance for their own code. What they did was to clear the stage of rubbish and to leave it free for each generation hereafter to deal in its own way with its own problems, æsthetic and ethical. The vital influence in the drama of Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century is not classic or romantic; it is not French or German; it comes from the north, from distant Norway; it is the influence of Henrik Ibsen.

Brander Matthews.

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THE CID

BY

PIERRE CORNEILLE

Pierre Corneille—"le grande Corneille"—was born in Rouen, June 6, 1606. His father, Pierre Corneille, was a legal official of high rank; his mother was Marthe de Pesant. The son was educated at the Jesuit school, and called to the bar, but practised with very little success. In 1629 his first play, "Melite," which is said to have been founded upon a personal experience, was received with favour at Rouen, and the young author took it to Paris, where it achieved immediate success at two theatres, the Marais and the Hôtel de Bourgogne. He continued to write, but met with no remarkable success until the appearance of "Médée," in 1635, which was followed by his great and famous tragedy, "Le Cid," in 1636. In the mean time he had been one of Richelieu's five poets—Rotrou, Colletet, Bois Robert, and L'Étoile making up the number; but he was too great a genius and too independent to retain favour long. His dismissal followed upon his suggestion for altering one of the cardinal's plots. But "Le Cid" was the talk of Paris, and it trod helter-skelter upon the rules of French classicism. Richelieu ordered the critics to write it down, and Scudéry and the Academy, lately founded by Richelieu, condemned it in a hostile "examen"; but adverse criticism was powerless. Corneille was at the height of his power, and a series of masterpieces followed, including "Le Menteur," one of the greatest comedies, and "Rodogune," considered by many his best tragedy. About 1647 his genius appears to have begun to decline, and "Pentharite," produced in 1653, was damned. Corneille, deeply wounded by his failure, retired from the stage and devoted himself to making a metrical translation of the "Imitation of Christ." It was not until 1659 that he again produced a play. Though he was haughty and sensitive by nature, and silent and awkward in society, his private life seems to have been very happy. He was not rich—never receiving more than a hundred louis for a play—a small private fortune and a poorly paid pension giving what was always inadequate support. He and his brother Thomas, who was also a writer of tragedy, married sisters, and for many years lived together in the same house. He had several children by this marriage, which occurred in 1640. Though he was to a considerable extent supplanted in public favour during the later years of his life by his younger rival, Racine, who had with him the support of Boileau and the king, his confidence in his own genius never deserted him, and he had as his friends Madame Sévigné, St. Evremond, and many others. Corneille lived in Rouen until 1662, when he removed to Paris, and there he died, in the Rue d'Argenteuil, October 1, 1684. The following is a complete list of his plays, with the dates of their appearance: "Melite" (comedy), 1629; "Clitandre" (tragedy), 1630; "La Veuve" (comedy), 1634; "La Galerie du Palais" (comedy), 1634; "La Suivante" (comedy), 1634; "La Place Royale" (comedy), 1635; "Médée" (tragedy), 1635; "L'Illusion Comique" (tragi-comedy), 1636; "Le Cid" (tragedy), 1636; "Horace" (tragedy), 1639; "Polyeucte" (tragedy), 1640; "La Mort de Pompée" (tragedy), 1641; "Le Menteur" (comedy), 1642; "Suite du Menteur" (comedy), 1642; "Théodore" (tragedy), 1645; "Rodogune" (tragedy), 1646; "Heraclius" (tragedy), 1647; "Andromède" (tragedy), 1650; "Don Sanche d'Aragon" (tragedy), 1651; "Nicomède" (tragedy), 1652; "Pentharite" (tragedy), 1653; "Œdipe" (tragedy), 1659; "La Toison d'Or" (tragedy), 1659; "Sertorius" (tragedy), 1662; "Sophonisbe" (tragedy), 1663; "Orthon" (tragedy), 1665; "Agesilas" (tragedy), 1665; "Attila" (tragedy), 1667; "Tite et Bérénice" (tragedy), 1670; "Pulcherie" (tragedy), 1672; "Surena" (tragedy), 1674. With Richelieu's four poets he contributed his share of one act to "Les Tuileries," "L'Aveugle de Smyrne," "La Grande Pastorale," and other plays; and in 1671 he joined Molière and Quinault in writing the opera of "Psyche." Some consider that the scene between Psyche and Cupid (Act III, Scene iii) contains his most beautiful verses. To all the plays up to "La Toison d'Or" he subjoined, in a collected edition, remarkable criticisms, which he calls "Examens."

THE AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

"A FEW days before, he had fought with Don Gómez, Count de Gormaz, and vanquished and slew him. This brought about his marriage with Dona Ximena, daughter and heiress of this same count. She herself requested the King to give her Rodrigo as a husband, or to punish him according to law, for having killed her father. The marriage was satisfactory to every one. She had a large dowry, and he was heir to a rich estate."—Mariana's "History of Spain."

The fragment given above is the historical source from which D. Guillem de Castro draws, who has put these celebrated events on the stage before myself. Those who understand Spanish will notice here two circumstances: the one is that Chimène, unable to blind herself to the noble qualities plainly to be seen in Roderick (although he had killed her father), herself proposed to the king the courageous alternatives—either that he should give him to her for a husband, or that he should punish him according to law; the other is that this marriage took place to the satisfaction of every one (á todos estaba á cuento). Two chronicles of the Cid add that it was celebrated by the Archbishop of Seville, in the presence of the king and his entire court. I, however, am satisfied to follow the text of the historian, since both of these chronicles have a tinge of romance, and are no more convincing than are our French chronicles of Charlemagne or Roland. What I have quoted from Mariana suffices to make clear the regard in which Chimène and her marriage were held in her own time, in which she shone with such splendour that the kings of Aragon and Navarre es-

teemed it an honour to be her sons-in-law, and married her two daughters.

Some writers in our time have not treated her so well, and, not to refer to what has been said of the Chimène of the stage, the French historian of Spain, in his history, has censured her as being too soon and easily consoled for the death of her father, and has attributed to a lack of depth an act which, by those who were witnesses of it, was imputed to greatness of soul. Two Spanish romances, which I will give following this introduction, speak still more favourably of her. Little poems like these are, as it were, originals secured from ancient history; and I should be ungrateful to the memory of this heroine if, after making her known in France, and becoming known in France through her, I should not endeavour to draw her from any position of disfavour in which she may be placed because her story has passed through my hands. I append these poems, then, as justification of the opinion held concerning her during her own life, rather than with any idea of justifying the manner in which I have made her appear in my own work. Time has done that for me, and the translations that have been made into all the languages that are used to-day for the drama, and among all the peoples who cultivate the theatre—that is to say, Italian, English, and Flemish—are a sufficiently convincing answer to any objections directed toward that point. I will further add about a dozen Spanish lines which seem made for her defence. They are from the author previously referred to, who has made her the subject of a drama before me—D. Guillem de Castro—who, in a comedy which he calls "Enganarse enganando," causes them to be said to a Princess of Béarn:

"... A mirar
Bien el mondo, que el tener
Apetitos que vencer,
Y ocasiones que dexar,
Examinan el valor
En la muger, yo dixera
Lo que siento, porque fuera
Luzimiento de mi honor.
Pero malicias fundadas
En honras mal entendidas
Hazen culpas declaradas;

"... If I looked
At the world with all its sinning,
With its appetites and wiles,
And temptation's luring smiles—
Woman's snare from the beginning—
I should speak as now I feel;
It would but my strength reveal.
And to blast a fair one's name,
Evil rumour, alway striving
With its devilish contriving,
Innocence has brought to shame.

Y assí, la que el dessear	She who, wishing and resisting,
Con el resistir apunta,	Strives to gain the mastery,
Veance dos vezes, si junta	Conquers twice if, ne'er desisting,
Con el resistir el callar."	She will suffer silently."

This describes, if I mistake not, the manner in which Chimène herself appears, in my work, in the presence of the King and the Infanta. I say, in the presence of the King and the Infanta, because when alone, or with her confidant or her lover, she is an altogether different person. Her manners are "uniformly changeable," to speak in terms of our Aristotle, and adapt themselves to changes of place, person, time, and circumstance—always, however, being in keeping with the same general principles.

Further, I feel obliged to disabuse the public of two errors which have crept abroad touching this tragedy, and which seem to be authorized by my silence. The first is the notion that I have agreed with the judges touching its merit, and that I have trusted myself to the opinion of those to whose judgment it has been committed. I should still preserve silence concerning this point, if this false report had not reached even to M. de Balzac in his province, or, to use his own words, "in his desert," and if I had not recently seen the evidences of it in the admirable letter which he has written on the subject, and which is not the least valuable of the two last treasures that he has given to us. As everything that proceeds from his pen concerns all posterity, and since my name will surely be handed down in that incomparable letter, it would be a disgrace to myself that it should hereafter bear this stain, and that I could be reproached with having compromised my reputation. This charge is one up to this time without precedent; and of all those who have been attacked as I have been, I know of no one who has been sufficiently weak to agree, of his own will, with his critics; and if they have given entire liberty of judgment to the public, as I have done, they have done so without feeling constrained, any more than I have felt, to agree with any one. Still further, in the situation which marked the affairs of the Cid at that time, it was not necessary to be a great prophet to foresee what we have seen take place. Without being extremely dull no one could be ignorant that,

as questions of that nature concern neither religion nor the state, they are to be decided in accordance with the rules of human sagacity, as well as by those of the theatre, and the author, without hesitation, can twist the meaning of the good Aristotle to the side of that which is appropriate. I do not know whether those who have criticised "The Cid" have done so following their own judgment or not, nor do I wish to assert that they have judged well or ill, but only that it never has been with my consent that they have made their criticisms, and that, perhaps, I could have justified myself with little difficulty, if the same reason that has impelled them to speak had not forced me to keep silent. Aristotle has not explained himself so clearly in the "Poetics" that we can not do with him as do the philosophers, who draw him each to his own side, in their contrary opinions. And as it is *pays inconnu* to many persons, the most zealous admirers of "The Cid" have believed the critics on their own dictum, and have fancied that they fully answered all objections by maintaining that it mattered little whether the play was according to the rules of Aristotle, and that Aristotle had laid down principles for his own century and for the Greeks, not for our century and the French.

This second error is no less unjust to Aristotle than to me. That great man treated the whole subject of poetry with so much skill and wisdom that the precepts relating to it which he left to us are of all times and of all peoples; and, far from giving his attention to the details of that which concerns merely the suitable or the agreeable, which necessarily will change, according as the circumstances change, he has been unswervingly true to the action of the soul, whose nature remains eternally the same. He has shown what passions tragedy ought to excite in its hearers; he has sought out the conditions necessary alike to the persons introduced and to the events represented, in order to give them birth; he has laid down certain laws which would have produced their fixed results everywhere since the creation of the world, and which will still be capable of producing them, as long as there shall be theatres and actors; and, for what remains, since places and times must change, he has let it alone, and has not even prescribed the

requisite number of acts, which was decreed only by Horace, long after him.

And, certainly, I should be the first to condemn "The Cid," if it offended against those great and ruling maxims that we have received from that philosopher; but, far from agreeing to any such suggestion, I venture to say that this fortunate poem has attained its extraordinary success only because in it are found the two leading conditions demanded by this great master of tragedy, which are so rarely brought together in the same work that one of the most learned commentators on his noble treatise on the subject maintains that, in the whole literature of antiquity, they are seen in conjunction only in the "Œdipus." The first condition is, that the one who suffers and is pursued is neither wholly wicked nor wholly virtuous, but a man more good than bad, who, by some display of a human weakness, which is not criminal, becomes involved in a misfortune undeserved; the other, that the persecution and the peril come not from an enemy, nor from one who is indifferent, but from one who can but love him that suffers and be loved by him. And here lies, to speak plainly, the secret, the true and only one, of the success of "The Cid," in which these two conditions can not fail to be recognised, unless the critic, in order to do the play an injustice, blind himself to them. I finish, then, by fulfilling my promise; and, having said to you these few words on "The Cid" of the theatre, I give you, in behalf of the Chimène of history, the two romances which I promised you.

Romance Primero

Delante el rey de León
Doña Ximena una tarde
Se pone á pedir justicia
Por la muerte de su padre,
Para contra el Cid la pide,
Don Rodrigo de Bivare,
Que huérfana la dexó
Niña, y de muy poca edade.
Si tengo razón, ó non,
Bien, rey, lo alcanzas y sabes,
Que los negocios de honra
No pueden disimularse.

First Romance

To the King, one afternoon,
Came Ximena weeping sadly;
Speedy vengeance her desire
For the killing of her sire:
On the Cid she asks it madly.
Orphan now and very young,
If my song be rightly sung,
Other life, and that full soon,
For her prayer were granted gladly.
"Well, my King, you understand,
Honour rules with iron hand,
One must grant its least demand;

Cada día que amanece
Veo al lobo de mi sangre
Gaballero en un caballo
Por darme mayor pesare.
Mándale, buen rey, pues puedes,
Y me defiende mis reynos,
Y quiero que me los guarde.
Pero yo faré un partido
Con él, que no os esté male,
De tomalle la palabra
Que no me ronde mi calle
Que no se venga en mugeres
El hombre que mucho vale.
Si mi padre afrentó al suyo
Bien ha vengado á su padre
Que si honras pagaron muertes,
Para su disculpa basten.
Encomendada me tienes,
No consientas que me agravien,
Que el que a mí se fiziere,
Á tu corona se faze.
Calledes, doña Ximena,
Que me dades pena grande,
Que yo daré buen remedio
Para todos vuestros males.
Al Cid no le he de ofender,
Que es hombre que mucho vale,
Para que con vos se case.
Contenta quedó Ximena,
Con la merced que le faze
Que quien huerfana la fizo
Aquesse mismo la ampare.

But to me is no relief?
Must I see him riding gaily,
See him, wolf-like, fattening daily
On my blood and on my grief?
Bid him, good King—'tis your power,
If you will it—from this hour
To protect me and my lands—
For he noble is and brave—
If his great life you would save.
But this promise grant me, sire:
That he come not to distress
And to haunt my helplessness—
This the favour I desire.
True my father's insult brought
The revenge he justly wrought,
And the sorrow I must feel
Does his nobleness reveal.
Guardian of my life, I place
Life and all within your care,
He who shall offend me there
Will insult your crown and race."
"Fair Ximena, hold your peace.
Do not grieve me. I will give
Remedy—and have him live,
And these sad misfortunes cease.
Noble is the Cid and true,
Him I can not give offence,
If he will but marry you."
Thus she heard, too glad for speaking,
What her broken heart was seeking:
He who took her father's life
Should protect her as his wife.

Romance Segundo

Á Ximena á Rodrigo
Prendió el rey palabra, y mano
De juntarlos para en uno
En presencia de Laín Calvo.
Las enemistades viejas
Con amor se conformaron,
Que donde preside el amor
Se olvidan muchos agravios.
Llegaron juntos los novios,
Y al dar la mano, y abraço,
El Cid mirando a la novia,
Le dixo todo turbado;

Second Romance

Then the King, by word and hand,
Took their promise, witnessed there
By the nobles of the land—
Blessed them both, and joined the pair.
All of pride and bitterness
Ended in love's fond caress;
For where love has made advances
Little hope for vengeance chances.
To Ximena Rodrigo
Gives his hand and, kneeling low,
Looking in her tearful eyes,
In a trembling voice replies:

Maté á tu padre, Ximena,
Pero no á desaguisado,
Matéle de hombre á hombre,
Para vengar cierto agravio.
Maté hombre, y hombre doy,
Aquí estoy a tu mandado,
Y en lugar del muerto padre
Cobraste un marido honrado.
A todos pareció bien
Su discreción alabaron,
Y assi se hizieron las bodas
De Rodrigo el Castellano.

"I am guilty, as you say,
Of his death; but it was just;
Man to man I gave the thrust
Insult's stain to wipe away.
Man I took and man I give
To obey as you command;
Lay my life within your hand;
In me shall your father live."
All rejoiced that it was so,
Praised the wisdom of the King.
So was married Rodrigo,
As my story bids me sing.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

FERNAND, first King of Castile.
URRAQUE, Infanta of Castile.
DIÈGUE, father of Roderick.
GOMEZ, Count of Gormaz, father of Chimène.
RODERICK, lover of Chimène.
SANCHO, enamoured of Chimène.
ARIAS, ALONSO, } Castilian gentlemen.
CHIMÈNE, daughter of the Count of Gormaz.
LEONORA, governess of the Infanta.
ELVIRE, governess of Chimène.
A PAGE of the Infanta.

THE SCENE IS AT SEVILLE

THE CID: A TRAGEDY[1]

ACT I

SCENE I

CHIMÈNE, ELVIRE

CHIMÈNE. Tell me, Elvire, is this a true report?
In naught dost thou disguise my father's words?
Elvire. My heart thrills with delight when I recall them.
Your love for Roderick vies with his esteem;
Unless I read amiss his inmost soul,
He will command that you return his love.
Chimène. Repeat, I pray, a second time the cause
Why thou dost think that he approves my choice;
What hope he gives me, let me learn anew;
Such welcome news I could forever hear.
Thou canst not with too sure a promise pledge
The sunlight of his sanction to our love.
What utterance gave he on the secret plot
That Roderick and Sancho made with thee?
Hast thou not made too clear the differences
Which draw me to my chosen Roderick's side?
Elvire. No, an indifferent heart I pictured yours,
That kindles not, nor blights, the hope of either,
And, not too stern, nor yet too soft, but waits
Your father's wish in choosing you a husband.

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This filial spirit charmed him, as his lips
And every feature quick assurance gave.
And since your heart demands his very words
Repeated o'er and o'er—why, here they are:

"Wisely she waits my choice; they both are worthy,
Of noble blood, of faithful, valiant soul.
Their youthful faces speak the unbroken line
Of shining virtues handed proudly down.
In Roderick's glance no slightest trace I see
Of aught but courage high and stainless honour.
Cradled amid war's trophies was this son,
So many warriors has his house produced.
A marvellous tale of valour and emprise,
His father's glorious acts have long been told;
And the seamed brow that tells the flight of years
Speaks clearer still his mighty deeds in arms.
The son will prove full worthy of the sire;
'Twould please me should he win my daughter's love."

Then to the council-chamber did he haste,
Whose pressing hour an interruption made;
But from his hurried words I think 'tis clear
He leans not strongly to the suit of either.
The king must choose a tutor for his son,
And this high service to your father gives;
The choice is certain, and his valour rare
Admits no fear of question or dispute;
His unmatched gifts ne'er meet a rival claim,
Whether in royal court or honour's field.
And since your Roderick has his father's word
To press the marriage, at the council's close,
Your heart may well assure you of his plea,
And in a tender hope will rest content.

Chimène. My troubled heart in hope finds little ease,
But, burdened with sad doubt, asks certainty:
Fate in a moment can reverse her will;
Even this happiness may mean a sorrow.

Elvire. Nay, happily that fear shall be dispelled.

Chimène. Away!—to wait the issue, what it be.

SCENE II

THE INFANTA, LEONORA, PAGE

Infanta. Page, quickly tell Chimène she stays too long
Before her promised coming; my affection
Complains that she neglects the heart that loves her.

[*Exit* PAGE.

Leonora. Madam, some longing burns within your soul,
For at each meeting anxiously you seek
The daily progress of her lover's suit.

Infanta. Have I not reason? Her young heart is pierced
By darts myself did level at her breast.
Her lover Roderick was my lover first,
And 'tis to me she owes his passion deep;
Thus having forged these lovers' lasting chains,
I yearn to see the end of all their pains.

Leonora. Madam, their dear delight in mutual love
Finds, as I read your heart, no echo there.
But sorrow weighs your spirit at their hopes.
Can your great soul feel grief at others' joy?
Why should your love for them react in pain,
And cause you suffering in their hour of rapture?
But, pardon, madam, I am over-bold.

Infanta. Concealment deepens sorrow, therefore hear
What struggles my too-loving heart has borne;
Listen what fierce assault my courage braves.
The tyrant Love spares neither high nor low;
This cavalier whose heart I've given away
I love!

Leonora. You love him!

Infanta. Feel my bounding pulse!
Mark what its conqueror's name alone can do;
It knows its master.

Leonora. Madam, pardon me,
I would not fail in gentle courtesy,
And rudely censure you for this affection.
But for a royal princess so to stoop
As to admit a simple cavalier
Within her heart—what would your father say?

What all Castile? Yours is the blood of kings!
Have you remembered that?

Infanta. So well, alas!
That I would ope these veins ere I would prove
False to the sacred trust of rank and name.
In noble souls, 'tis true, worth, worth alone
Should kindle love's bright fires; and did I choose
To justify my passion, many a one
As high-born as myself could give me cause.
But honour heeds not Love's excuses fond,
And sense, surprised, makes not my courage less.
The daughter of a king must mate with kings;
No other hand than kingly sues for mine.
To save my heart from well-nigh fatal stroke,
With mine own hand I turned the steel away.
I drew the bond that binds him to Chimène,
And tuned their notes to love to still my own.
No longer wonder that my harassed soul,
With restless haste, will urge their nuptials on.
Love lives on hope, and dies when hope is dead—
A flame that needs perpetual renewal.
My heart has suffered much; but if this tie
Be consummated with no long delay,
My hope is dead, my wounded spirit healed.
But till that hour I'm rent with varying pangs;
I will to lose, yet suffer in my loss;
The love I would resign I still would keep;
And thus the court that to Chimène he pays
Excites the secret pain I can not hide.
Love moves my sighs for one whose rank I scorn.
My mind divided feels a double pang;
My will is strong; my heart is all aflame.
I dare not hope from their united lives
More than a mingled sense of joy and pain.
Honour and Love war on this fatal field;
Neither can wholly conquer, neither yield.

Leonora. Madam, I blame not, but I pity you,
And have no word to utter, save that I
Sigh with your sighs and suffer in your grief.

But since your royal heart, unstained and strong,
Can front an ill so tempting and so sharp,
And bear it down, your noble spirit soon
Will know again its sweet serenity.
Time is the friend of Virtue; with its aid
You will forget; and Heaven, whose God is just,
Will not forsake you in this trying hour.

Infanta. My surest hope is hope's own swift defeat.

Enter Page

Page. Chimène awaits your Highness at your wish.

Infanta. [*To* Leonora.] Go, entertain her in the gallery.

Leonora. Here, brooding o'er your sorrow, will you stay?

Infanta. No, I but wish to hide my grief from her,
And to assume a joy I scarce can feel;
I follow soon.

SCENE III

Infanta. [*Alone.*] Just Heaven, whence I must hope alone for aid,
Put to this bitter suffering an end;
Grant me repose; in honour's path be guide;
In others' bliss my own I fain would seek.
Three hearts are waiting for this marriage bond;
Oh, hasten it, or strengthen my weak soul!
The tie that makes these happy lovers one
Will break my fetters and my anguish end.
But I am lingering; I will seek Chimène;
Her gentle presence will assuage my pain.

SCENE IV

The Count, Diègue

Count. At last you win the prize; the royal hand
Uplifts you to a place where I should stand.
You are to train the young prince of Castile.

Diègue. His justice and his gratitude the king
Has blended in this honour to my house.

Count. Kings, howsoever great they be, are men,
And, like us all, they ofttimes strangely err;

All courtiers may, in this, a warning see
That present service meets but poor reward.

Dièguе. No longer let us speak upon a theme
So chafing to your spirit; kindness may
Have turned the balance quite as much as merit.
But to a king whose power is absolute
'Tis due to take, nor question, what he wills.
An added honour I would ask of you—
The union of our houses and our names.
You have a daughter, I an only son,
Their marriage would forever make us one
In more than friendship's bonds; this favour grant.

Count. To such alliance does this youth presume?
Will the new splendour of your office serve
To puff his mind with swelling vanity?
Use your new dignity, direct the prince,
Instruct him how a province should be ruled
So all his subjects tremble 'neath his laws,
And love and terror make his throne secure;
To civic duties add a soldier's life—
To laugh at hardship, ply the trade of Mars
Undaunted and unequalled; pass long days
And nights on horseback; to sleep fully armed;
To force a stronghold, and, the battle won,
To owe the glory to himself alone.
Instruct him by example; his young eyes
Must in yourself his perfect pattern see.

Dièguе. Your envious soul speaks in your sneering words;
But, for example, he need only turn
The pages of my life; therein he'll read,
Through a long story of heroic acts,
How to subdue the nations, storm a fort,
Command an army, and to make a name
Whose wide renown shall rest on mighty deeds.

Count. Living examples are the only guides;
Not from a book a prince his lesson learns.
Your boasted years a single day of mine
Equals not only, but surpasses oft.
Valiant you have been; I am valiant now!

On my strong arm this kingdom rests secure;
When my sword flashes, Aragon retreats,
Granada trembles; by my name of might
Castile is girdled round as by a wall.
Without me you would pass 'neath other laws,
And soon you'd have your enemies your kings.
Each day, each flying hour, exalts my fame,
Adds victory unto victory, praise to praise.
Under the guarding shadow of my arm
The prince should prove his mettle on the field,
Should learn by seeing conquest how to conquer.
In his young princehood he should early win
The loftiest heights of courage; he should see——

Dièguе. I know! you serve the king, your master, well;
'Neath my command I've often watched you fight;
And since the stiffening currents of old age
Have chilled my powers, your prowess nobly shows—
No more; what I have been, you are to-day.
'Tis true, however, that when choice is due,
Our monarch sees a difference 'twixt us still.

Count. Nay! you have stolen what was mine by right!

Dièguе. To win an honour is the proof of merit.

Count. He is most worthy who can use it best.

Dièguе. To be refused it is poor proof of worth.

Count. You've used a courtier's wiles, and won by trick!

Dièguе. My fame has been my only partisan.

Count. Admit the king but honours your old age.

Dièguе. My years the king but measures by my deeds.

Count. If deeds are years, I'm elder far than you!

Dièguе. Who not obtained this honour not deserved it.

Count. I not deserved it? I?

Dièguе. Yes, you!

Count. Old man,
Thine insolence shall have its due reward. [*Gives him a blow.*

Dièguе. [*Drawing his sword.*] Quick, run me through!—the first of all my race
To wear a flush of shame upon my brow.

Count. What dost thou hope thine impotence can do?

Dièguе. O God! my worn-out strength at need forsakes me.

Count. Thy sword is mine, but thou wouldst be too vain
If I should take this trophy of thy fall.
Adieu! Go read the prince, in spite of sneers,
For his instruction, thy life's history.
This chastisement of insolent discourse
Will prove, methinks, no slight embellishment.

SCENE V

Dièguе. Rage and despair! age, my worst enemy!
Must my great life end with a foul disgrace?
Shall laurels gained with slowly whitening locks,
In years of warlike toils, fade in a day?
And does the arm all Spain has wondered at,
Whose might has often saved the king his throne,
And kept the rod of empire in his grasp,
Betray me now, and leave me unavenged?
O sad remembrance of my vanished glory!
O years of life undone in one short hour!
This new-won height is fatal to my fortune,
A precipice from which my honour falls.
Must the count's triumph add the final pang
To death dishonourable, to life disgraced?
The office, Count, is thine; thine the high place
Of tutor to my prince, for thine own hand,
With envious insult, the king's choice reversed,
And leaves me here with hope and honour gone.
And thou, brave instrument of my exploits,
But useless ornament of feeble age,
Once terror of my enemies, but now
A bauble, not a man's defence at need—
My sword!—go, quit thy now dishonoured master;
Pass, to avenge me, into worthier hands!

SCENE VI

DIÈGUE, RODERICK

Dièguе. Hast thou a brave heart, Roderick?
Roderick. Any man
Except my father soon would prove it so.

Dièguе. O pleasing choler! wrath that soothes my hurt!
My own blood speaks in this resentment swift,
And in thy heat my youth comes back to me.
My son, my scion, come, repair my wrong;
Avenge me instantly!

Roderick. For what? for what?

Dièguе. For an affront so cruel, so unjust,
'Tis fatal to the honour of our house.
A blow! across my cheek! his life had paid,
Save that my nerveless arm betrayed my will.
This sword, which I again can never wield,
I pass to thee for vengeance to the death.
Against this arrogance thy courage set;
Only in blood such stains are cleansed, and thou
Must kill or die. This man, mine enemy,
Whom thou must meet, is worthy of thy steel;
Begrimed with blood and dust, I've seen him hold
An army terror-stricken at his will,
And break a hundred squadrons by his charge;
And, to say all, more than a leader brave,
More than a warrior great, he is—he is—

Roderick. In mercy speak!

Dièguе. The father of Chimène!

Roderick. Chimène!

Dièguе. Nay, answer not; I know thy love;
But who can live disgraced deserves not life.
Is the offender dear, worse the offence.
Thou know'st my wrong; its quittance lies with thee;
I say no more; avenge thyself and me!
Remember who thy father is—and was!
Weighed down with Fate's misfortunes heaped on me,
I go to mourn them. Do thou fly to vengeance!

SCENE VII

Roderick. My heart's o'erwhelmed with woe.
A mortal stroke that mocks my tender trust
Makes me avenger of a quarrel just,
And wretched victim of an unjust blow.

Though crushed in spirit, still my pride must cope
With that which slays my hope.
So near to love's fruition to be told—
O God, the strange, strange pain!—
My father has received an insult bold,
The offender is the father of Chimène.

'Mid conflicts wild I stand.
I lift my arm to strike my father's foe,
But Love with mighty impulse urges "No!"
Pride fires my heart, affection stays my hand;
I must be deaf to Passion's calls, or face
A life of deep disgrace.
Whate'er I do, fierce anguish follows me—
O God, the strange, strange pain!
Can an affront so base unpunished be?
But can I fight the father of Chimène?

To which allegiance give?—
To tender tyranny or noble bond?—
A tarnished name or loss of pleasures fond?
Unworthy or unhappy must I live.
[*To his sword.*] Thou dear, stern hope of souls high-born and bold
And fired with love untold,
But enemy of my new dreams of bliss,
Sword, cause of all my pain,
Was't given me to use for this, for this?—
To save my honour, but to lose Chimène?

I must seek death's dread bourne.
To weigh my duty and my love is vain.
If I avenge his death, her hate I gain,
If I no vengeance take, I win her scorn;
Unfaithful must I prove to hope most sweet,
Or for that hope unmeet.
What heals my honour's wounds augments my grief,
And causes keener pain;
Be strong, my soul! Since death's my sole relief,
I'll die, nor lose the love of my Chimène.

What, die without redress?
Seek death—so fatal to my future fame?
Endure that Spain shall heap on me the shame
Of one who failed in honour's sorest stress?
All for a love whose hope my frenzied heart
Already sees depart?
I'll list no longer to the subtle plea
Which but renews my pain;
Come, arm of mine, my choice turns now to thee,
Since naught, alas! can give me back Chimène.

Yes, love my will misled.
My father—life and name to him I owe—
Whether of grief or from a mortal blow
I die, my blood all pure and true I'll shed.
Too long I've dallied with a purpose weak;
Now vengeance swift I seek.
The flush of shame mounts hotly to my brow,
That I can deem it pain
To save my father's house. I haste e'en now
To seek—woe's me!—the father of Chimène.

ACT II

SCENE I

ARIAS, THE COUNT

COUNT. I grant you that my somewhat hasty blood
Took fire too soon, and carried me too far;
But—what is done, is done: the blow was struck.

Arias. To the king's will let your proud spirit yield.
This moves him deeply, and his anger roused
Will make you suffer penalty extreme.
No just defence can you before him plead;
The deed was gross, the aged victim great;
No common rule that serves 'twixt man and man
Will meet the high demand exacted here.

Count. The king can use my life to suit his will.
Arias. You add the fault of anger to your deed.
The king still loves you well; appease his wrath;
You know his wish; you will not disobey?
Count. To disobey—a little—were no crime,
Should it preserve the fame I most do prize.
But were it such, forsooth, my valiant service
More than suffices for o'erlooking it.
Arias. For deeds howe'er illustrious and high,
A king can ne'er become a subject's debtor.
Better than any other you should know
Who serves his king well does his simple duty;
This haughty confidence will cost you dear.
Count. I will believe you when I pay the price.
Arias. You should respect your monarch's sovereign will.
Count. I can outlive a single day's displeasure.
Let the whole state be armed to hurl me down—
If I be made to suffer, Spain will fall!
Arias. What! you, forsooth, defy the power supreme!
Count. Why should I fear a sceptred hand whose grasp
Is weaker than my own? He knows my use;
My head, in falling, will shake off his crown.
Arias. Let reason rule your action; be advised.
Count. I wish no further counsel: all is said.
Arias. What message to your king shall I report?
Count. That I shall ne'er consent to my disgrace.
Arias. Remember that you brave a tyrant's power.
Count. The die is cast and longer speech is vain.
Arias. Adieu, then, since I can not change your will.
E'en on your laurelled head the bolt may strike!
Count. I wait it without fear.
Arias. 'Twill cast you down.
Count. Then old Diègue will be well satisfied. [*Exit* Arias.
Who fears not death need surely not fear threats.
My proud resolve yields not to weak disgrace;
Though I be stripped of fortune, rank, and name,
Myself alone can rob me of my honour.

SCENE II

THE COUNT, RODERICK

Roderick. Grant me a word, Count.
Count. Speak.
Roderick. Dost know Dièguе?
Count. Yes.
Roderick. Listen, then, and let us softly speak.
Dost also know that his now feeble arm
Was once Spain's chiefest honour, valour, glory?
Count. Perhaps!
Roderick. This fire enkindled in my eyes
Marks the same blood as his; dost thou know that?
Count. What matters that to me?
Roderick. I'll teach you, Count,
At some four paces hence, what matters it.
Count. Presumptuous youth!
Roderick. Speak quietly, I pray.
My years are few, but, Count, in high-born souls,
Valour and youth full oft united are.
Count. And thou wouldst stand 'gainst me! thou vain, untried,
Impudent upstart? Cease thy boyish brag!
Roderick. The temper of my steel will not demand
A second proof; the first will be enough.
Count. Know'st thou to whom thou speakest?
Roderick. I know well!
Another than I am would hear with dread
The mention of thy name: thy crowns of palm
Must mean to me, 'twould seem, the stroke of doom.
But bold I meet thine all-victorious arm;
Where courage leads, there force will aye be found.
A father's honour is a triple shield;
Invincible thou art not, though unconquered.
Count. Thy fearless words a fearless heart reveal.
I've watched thy growing powers from day to day;
In thee the future glory of Castile
I have believed to see, and proud of heart,
Was laying in thine own my daughter's hand.

I know thy love, and charmed am I to learn
That duty is a dearer mistress still,
Nor soft emotions weaken warlike zeal.
Thy manly worth responds to my esteem;
And wishing for my son a noble knight,
I did not err when I made choice of thee.
But pity stirs within me at thy words;
Such boldness ill befits thy youthful form;
Let not thy maiden effort be thy last;
I can not fight a combat so unequal;
A victory won without a peril braved
Is but inglorious triumph, and for me
Such contest is not fitting. None would dream
Thou couldst withstand an instant, and regret
At thy young, foolish death would e'er be mine.

Roderick. Thy pity more insults me than thy scorn;
Thou fear'st my arm, but dar'st attack my honour.

Count. Withdraw from here!

Roderick. Let us to deeds, not words!

Count. Art tired of life?

Roderick. Dost thou, then, fear to die?

Count. Come on! Thou'rt right. I'll help thee do thy duty!
'Tis a base son survives a father's fame!

SCENE III

The Infanta, Chimène, Leonora

Infanta. Nay, do not weep! allay thy grief, Chimène!
This sorrow should disclose thy spirit's strength.
After this transient storm a calm will fall,
And happiness, deferred and clouded now,
Will brighter seem in contrast. Do not weep!

Chimène. My heart, worn out with trouble, has no hope.
A storm so sudden and so terrible,
To my poor bark brings direful threat of wreck.
Ere I set sail upon my smiling sea,
I perish in the harbour. I was loved
By him I fondly loved; our sires approved;

But even while I told my charming story
At that same moment was the quarrel on,
Whose sad recital changed my tale to woe.
O cursed ambition! wrath's insanity!
Pride, to my dearest wishes pitiless,
Whose tyranny the noblest nature rules!
In sighs and tears a heavy price I pay.

Infanta. Thy fears o'ercome thee; 'tis a hasty word;
The quarrel of a moment dies as soon.
The king already seeks to make a peace;
And I, as well thou knowest, to dry thy tears
And heal thy grief would try the impossible.

Chimène. No reconciliation can avail.
Such wounds are mortal and defy all art
Of king or princess, of command or pleading.
And though an outward show of peace be gained,
The fires of hate, compressed within the heart,
Burn fiercer, and will break at last in flame.

Infanta. When Love has bound Chimène and Roderick
In sacred marriage, hatred will depart;
Their fathers will forget, and happiness
Will silence discord in sweet harmony.

Chimène. I wish for such an end, but dare not hope.
'Tis a matched combat between two proud souls;
Neither will yield; I know them; I must weep!
The past I mourn, the future frightens me.

Infanta. What fearest thou? an old man's feebleness?

Chimène. Brave sires make braver sons; Roderick is bold.

Infanta. He is too young.

Chimène. Such men are born high-hearted!

Infanta. Thou shouldst not fear his boldness overmuch;
He can not wound thee, whom he loves so well;
A word from thy sweet lips will check his wrath.

Chimène. How shall I speak it? If he do not yield,
'Tis but an added burden to my heart;
And if he do, what will men say of him—
His father's son, to see his father's fall,
Nor lift an arm of vengeance? In this strait
I stand confused, nor know what I would choose—

His too weak love, or his too stern refusal.

Infanta. In thy high soul, Chimène, no thought can live
Unworthy of thee; love but more exalts.
But if, until this trouble be o'erpast,
I make a prisoner of this gallant youth,
Preventing thus the dread results you fear,
Would it offend thy proud and loving heart?

Chimène. Ah! madam, then my cares are quieted.

SCENE IV

The Infanta, Chimène, Leonora, the Page

Infanta. Page, summon Roderick hither; I would see him.

Page. He and the Count de Gormaz——

Chimène. Heaven, oh, help me!

Infanta. What? Speak!

Page. Together they have left the palace.

Chimène. Alone?

Page. Yes, and they muttered angrily.

Chimène. They've come to blows! all words are useless now;
Madam, forgive this haste—my heart will break!

SCENE V

The Infanta, Leonora

Infanta. Alas! that such inquietude is mine;
I weep her griefs, but Roderick still enthrals;
My peace is gone; my dying flame revives.
The fate that parts Chimène from him she loves
Renews alike my sorrow and my hope.
Their separation, cruel though it be,
Excites a secret ecstasy in me.

Leonora. Surely, the noble virtue of your soul
Yields not so soon to passion's baser thrall.

Infanta. Nay, do not name it thus, since in my heart,
Strong and triumphant, it controls my will;
Respect my love, for it is dear to me;
My nobler pride forbids it—yet I hope.
Ill-guarded 'gainst a madness so bewild'ring,

My heart flies to a love Chimène has lost.

Leonora. And thus your high resolve all-powerless fails?
And Reason lays her wonted sceptre down?

Infanta. Ah! Reason has a harsh and rude effect,
When such sweet poison has inflamed the heart;
The patient loves his painful malady,
Nor willingly accepts a healing draught.

Leonora. Be not beguiled by Love's seductions soft;
That Roderick is beneath you, all well know.

Infanta. Too well myself must know it, but my heart
Hears subtle words which Love, the flatterer, speaks.
If from this combat Roderick victor comes,
And this great warrior falls beneath his blow,
What other plea need Love, the pleader, use?
Who could withstand that conqueror's conqueror!
My fancy sets no bounds to his exploits;
Whole kingdoms soon would fall beneath his laws;
I see him on Granada's ancient throne;
The subject Moors with trembling do his will;
Proud Aragon acknowledges him king,
And Portugal receives him, while the seas
Bear his high destiny to other lands.
In Afric's blood his laurels shall be dyed,
And all that e'er was said of greatest chief,
I hear of Roderick, this victory won;
Then in his love my highest glory lies.

Leonora. Nay, madam, 'tis your fancy makes you dream
Of conquests whose beginning may not chance.

Infanta. The count has done the deed—Roderick enraged—
They have gone forth to combat—needs there more?

Leonora. E'en should they fight—since you will have it so—
Will Roderick prove the knight you picture him?

Infanta. Nay, I am weak; my foolish mind runs wild;
Love spreads its snares for victims such as I.
Come to my chamber; there console my grief,
Nor leave me till this troubled hour is o'er.

SCENE VI

THE KING, ARIAS, SANCHO

King. Pray, is this haughty count bereft of sense?
Dares he believe his crime can be o'erlooked?
Arias. To him I have conveyed your strong desire;
Nothing I gained from long and earnest pleas.
King. Just Heaven! a subject have I in my realm
So rash that he will disregard my wish?
My oldest, foremost courtier he affronts,
Then aims his boundless insolence at me!
The law, in my own court, he would decree:
Leader and warrior, great howe'er he be,
I'll school his haughty soul with lesson hard.
Were he the god of battles, valour's self,
Obedience to his sovereign he shall pay.
Although his act like chastisement deserved,
It was my will to show him leniency.
Since he abuses mercy, from this hour
He is a prisoner, all resistance vain.
Sancho. Pray, sire, a brief delay may calm his mind.
Fresh from the quarrel he was first approached,
Boiling with passion. Sire, a soul like his,
So hasty and so bold, belies itself
In its first impulse; soon he'll know his fault,
But can not yet admit he was the offender.
King. Be silent, Sancho, and be warned henceforth.
He who defends the guilty shares the guilt.
Sancho. Yea, sire, I will obey, but grant me grace
To say one further word in his defence.
King. What can you say for such a reckless man?
Sancho. Concessions do not suit a lofty soul
Accustomed to great deeds; it can conceive
Of no submission without loss of honour.
He can not bend his pride to make amends;
Too humble is the part you'd have him play;
He would obey you were he less a man.
Command his arm, nourished 'mid war's alarms,
To right this wrong upon the field of honour.

The boldest champion who his steel will face
He will accept and make atonement swift.
King. You fail in due respect, but youth is rash,
And in your ardour I your fault excuse.
A king, whom prudence ever should inform,
Is guardian of his subjects' life and death.
O'er mine I watch with care, and jealously,
Like a great head, I guard my members well.
Your reason, then, no reason is for me;
You speak, a soldier; I must act, a king.
Moreover, let the count think what he will,
Obedience to his king ennobles him.
He has affronted me; he rudely stained
The honour of my son's appointed guide.
To strike a blow at him—'tis nothing less
Than to attack with blows the power supreme.
I'll hear no more. Listen!—there have been seen
Ten hostile vessels, with their colours up;
They've dared approach clear to the river's mouth.
Arias. The Moors have learned, perforce, to know you well;
Conquered so oft, what courage can they feel
To risk themselves against their conqueror?
King. They'll never see, without a jealous rage,
My sceptre rule o'er Andalusia.
That lovely land, by them too long possessed,
Always with envious eye they closely watch.
That was the only cause why Castile's throne
In old Seville I placed, now years ago;
I would be near, and ready at demand,
To overthrow uprising or attack.
Arias. They know, at cost of many a mighty chief,
That triumph, sire, your presence only needs.
Naught can you have to fear.
King. Nor to neglect;
For confidence is danger's sure ally.
Well do you know with what an easy sweep
A rising tide may float them to our walls.
'Tis but a rumour; let no panic rise,
Nor causeless fears be spread by false alarms.

Stir not the city in the hours of night;
But doubly fortify the walls and harbour.
Enough, till more is known.

SCENE VII

The King, Alonso, Sancho, Arias

Alonso. The count is dead!
Dièguе has taken vengeance by his son!
King. Soon as the affront I learned, I feared revenge.
Would that I might have turned that fatal wrath!
Alonso. Chimène approaches, bathed in bitter tears,
And at your feet would she for justice plead.
King. Compassion moves my soul at her mishaps;
But the count's deed, methinks, has well deserved
This chastisement of his audacity.
And yet, however just may be his doom,
I lose with pain a warrior strong and true,
After long service rendered to our state,
His blood poured out for us a thousand times.
His pride excites my anger, but my throne
His loss enfeebles while his death bereaves.

SCENE VIII

The King, Dièguе, Chimène, Sancho, Arias, Alonso

Chimène. Justice, sire, justice!
Dièguе. Ah, sire, let me speak!
Chimène. Behold me, at your feet!
Dièguе. I clasp your knees!
Chimène. 'Tis justice I demand!
Dièguе. Hear my defence!
Chimène. Punish the insolence of this bold youth!
He has struck down your kingdom's chief support!
My father he has slain!
Dièguе. To avenge his own!
Chimène. A subject's blood demands his monarch's justice!
Dièguе. A vengeance just demands no punishment.
King. Rise, and in calmness let us hear of this.

Chimène, my deepest sympathy is stirred;
A grief not less than yours affects my heart.
[*To* DIEGUE.] You will speak after, nor disturb her plaint.

Chimène. My father, sire, is dead; mine eyes have seen
Great drops of blood roll from his noble side;
That blood that oft your walls has fortified;
That blood that many times your fights has won;
That blood which, shed, still holds an angry heat
To be outpoured for other lives than yours.
What in war's deadliest carnage ne'er was spilled,
The hand of Roderick sheds upon your soil.
Breathless and pale, I reached the fatal spot;
I found him lifeless, sire—forgive my tears;
In this sad tale words mock my trembling lips;
My sighs will utter what I can not speak.

King. Take courage, child; thy king henceforth shall be
Thy father, in the place of him that's lost.

Chimène. Such honour, sire, I ask not in my woe;
I said I found him lifeless: open wound
And blood outpoured, and mixed with horrid dust,
Showed me my duty, drove me here in haste;
That dreadful gaping mouth speaks with my voice,
And must be heard by the most just of kings.
O sire, let not such license reign unchecked
Beneath your sovereign sway, before your eyes;
So the most noble may, without restraint,
Suffer the blows of beardless insolence,
And a young braggart triumph o'er their glory,
Bathe in their blood and mock their memory.
This valiant warrior, slain, if unavenged,
Will surely cool the ardour of your knights.
O sire, grant vengeance for my father's death!
Your throne demands it more than my poor heart.
His rank was high, his death will cost you dear;
Pay death with death, and blood with blood avenge.
A victim, not for me, but for your crown,
Your person, and your majesty, I beg—
A victim that will show to all the state
The madness of a deed so arrogant.

King. What say'st, Dièguе?
Dièguе. Worthy of envy he
Who, losing life's best gift, can part with life!
For age's weakness brings to noble souls
A mournful fate before its closing scene.
I, whose proud 'scutcheon is graved o'er with deeds,
I, whom a victor laurels oft have crowned,
To-day, because too long with life I've stayed,
Affronted prostrate lie and powerless.
What neither siege nor fight nor ambuscade,
Nor all your foes, nor all my envious friends,
Nor Aragon could do, nor proud Granada,
The count, your subject, jealous of your choice,
Bold in the power which youth has over age,
Has done within your court, beneath your eye.
Thus, sire, these locks, 'neath war's rough harness blanched,
This blood, so gladly lavished in your cause,
This arm, the lifelong terror of your foes,
To a dishonoured grave would have descended,
Had not my son proved worthy of his sire,
An honour to his country and his king.
He took his father's sword, he slew the count,
He gave me back my honour cleansed from stain.
If to show courage and resentment deep,
If to avenge a blow, claim punishment,
On me alone should fall your anger's stroke.
When the arm errs, the head must bear the blame.
Whether this be a crime of which we speak,
His was the hand, but mine, sire, was the will.
Chimène names him her father's murderer;
The deed was mine; I longed to take his place.
Spare for your throne the arm of youth and might,
But slay the chief whom Time o'ermasters soon.
If an old soldier's blood will expiate
And satisfy Chimène, 'tis hers to shed;
Far from repining at such stern decree,
I'll glory in an honourable death.
King. Of deep and serious import is this deed,
And in full council must be gravely met.

Lead the count's daughter home; and you, Dièguе,
Shall be held prisoner by your word of honour.
Let Roderick be brought; I must do justice.

Chimène. 'Tis justice, sire, a murderer should die.

King. Allay your grief, my child, and take repose.

Chimène. When silence urges thought, then anguish grows.

ACT III

SCENE I

RODERICK, ELVIRE

ELVIRE. Roderick, what hast thou done? why com'st thou here?

Roderick. I follow my sad fate's unhappy course.

Elvire. Whence hast thou this audacity, to come
To places filled with mourning by thy deed?
Com'st here to brave the dead count's very shade?
Hast thou not killed him?

Roderick. To my shame he lived;
My father's house demanded that he die.

Elvire. But why seek shelter 'neath thy victim's roof?
What murderer ever sought retreat so strange?

Roderick. I come to yield myself up to my judge.
No more look on me with astonished eye;
I seek my death in penance for a death.
My love's my judge, my judge Chimène alone.
Sharper than death the knowledge of her hate;
That I deserve, and I have come to ask
The sentence of her lips, her hand's death blow.

Elvire. Nay, rather flee her sight, her passion's force,
Remove thy presence from her fresh despair.
Flee! shun the promptings of her anguish new
Which will but rouse to fury every feeling.

Roderick. This dearest object of my heart's desire
Can not too sorely chide me in her wrath;

That is a punishment I well deserve.
In seeking for a death from hand of hers
I shun a hundred others worse to face.

Elvire. Chimène is at the palace, drowned in tears,
And will return escorted from the king.
Flee, Roderick, flee! pray add not to my cares.
What would be said if here thou shouldst be seen!
Wouldst thou that slander, adding to her woe,
Charge that she hide her father's murderer?
She'll soon return! Hark! hark! she comes, she's here!
Hide thyself, then, for her sake; Roderick, hide!

SCENE II

Sancho, Chimène, Elvire

Sancho. True, madam, blood alone pays debts like this;
Your wrath is righteous, and your tears are just.
I would not try with weak and foolish words
To calm your anger or console your grief.
But if to serve you I am capable,
My sword is at your service to command;
My love is yours to avenge your father's death;
If you I serve, my arm will outmatch his.

Chimène. O wretched that I am!

Sancho. Accept my sword!

Chimène. It would offend the king, who pledges justice.

Sancho. The march of Justice often is so slow
That crime escapes the tardy loiterer.
Her oft uncertain course costs tears and pain!
Suffer a knight to avenge you with his sword;
The way is sure, the punishment is swift.

Chimène. It is the last resort. If come it must,
And still my sorrows move your soul to pity,
You shall be free to avenge my injury.

Sancho. To that one happiness my soul aspires,
And hoping this, I leave you, well content.

SCENE III

CHIMÈNE, ELVIRE

Chimène. At last, in freedom from a forced restraint,
I can pour out to thee my poignant woe,
Can give an utterance to my mournful sighs,
And let my soul tell all its many griefs.
My father's dead, Elvire; the maiden thrust
Of Roderick's sword has cut his life-thread short.
Weep, weep, my eyes, dissolve yourselves in tears;
One half my heart the other half entombs;
And for this mortal stroke, my heart that loves
Must vengeance take for that which is no more.

Elvire. Rest, madam, rest.

Chimène. Nay, mock me not with words!
In misery like mine to speak of rest!
Whence ever shall my agony be soothed
Unless I hate the hand that caused my grief?
What respite can I hope from torment aye,
When love and hate both seek the criminal?

Elvire. You still can love the one who killed your father?

Chimène. Love is a word too weak for what I feel;
I do adore him, spite of my resentment;
My lover and my enemy are one.
Still, notwithstanding all my hatred fierce,
Against my father Roderick contends;
My filial love resists his sweet assault,
And struggles, feeble now, and now triumphant.
In this rude war of anger and of love,
My heart is rent, but stronger grows my soul;
I feel Love's power, but duty's deeper claims
Forbid that I should change or hesitate;
I balance not, nor swerve, when honour leads.
To me is Roderick dear; I weep his fate;
My heart pleads in his favour, yet, alas!
I am my father's daughter; he is dead.

Elvire. Shall you pursue it further?

Chimène. Cruel thought!
And cruel path which I am forced to tread!

I seek his life, yet fear my end to gain;
My death will follow his, yet he must die.

Elvire. Nay, madam, quit so terrible a task,
Nor on yourself impose a law so stern.

Chimène. My father dead—nay, snatched from my embrace!
Shall his dear blood unheard for vengeance cry?
Shall my weak heart, snared by seducing spells,
With woman's tears alone pay honour's debt?
Shall guileful love betray my filial duty,
And in a shameful silence still its voice?

Elvire. Believe me, madam, there is much excuse
For cooler counsels toward a loving heart,
Against a lover dear. You've made appeal
Unto the king himself; press not too far
Persistence in this purpose strange and sad.

Chimène. My word is pledged to vengeance; it must fall.
Love would beguile us with sweet subtleties;
To noble souls excuses shameful seem.

Elvire. If you love Roderick, he can not offend you.

Chimène. 'Tis true!

Elvire. Then, after all, what will you do?

Chimène. I will avenge my father, end my woe;
I'll follow him, destroy him, then I'll—die!

SCENE IV

RODERICK, CHIMÈNE, ELVIRE

Roderick. Nay, madam, you shall find an easier way;
My life is in your hand; your honour's sure.

Chimène. Elvire, where are we? Who is this I see?
Is Roderick in my house?—before my eyes?

Roderick. I offer you my life; taste, when you will,
The sweetness of my death and your revenge.

Chimène. Oh, woe!

Roderick. Pray, hear me!

Chimène. Nay, I die!

Roderick. A moment!

Chimène. Go; let me die!

Roderick. I would but speak a word.

You shall reply with sword-thrust at my heart.
Chimène. What! with a blade stained with my father's blood?
Roderick. Chimène!
Chimène. Remove that object from mine eyes!
Its sight recalls thy crime and sues for death!
Roderick. Nay, gaze upon it; 'twill excite still more
Thy hatred and thy wrath; 'twill haste my doom.
Chimène. 'Tis tinged with my own blood.
Roderick. Plunge it in mine!
Wash in my veins what it has brought from thine.
Chimène. Oh, cruel steel, which in one awful day
A father's and a daughter's life can take.
I can not live and see it! Take it hence!
Thou bid'st me hear, and yet thou strik'st me dead!
Roderick. I do thy will, but cherish still the wish
Of ending by thy hand my wretched life.
Not even love of thee works in my soul
Craven repentance for a righteous deed.
The fatal end of wrath too swift and hot
Brought shame upon my father's honoured head.
The insult of a blow what heart can bear?
The affront was mine, I sought its author swift,
And swift avenged the honour of my sire.
Were it again to do, again 'twere done!
But even 'gainst the inevitable deed,
My love long struggled for supremacy.
Judge how it ruled my heart, when I could pause,
In such an hour of rage, and hesitate
Between my house, my father, and—my love,
Compelled to wound thy heart or stand disgraced.
Myself I did accuse of haste undue,
Of passions too alive to feel affront.
Thy beauty might have turned the balance still,
But for the thought that pressed itself at last—
A man disgraced had naught to offer thee,
And vainly would thy heart's voice plead for me,
If nobleness were sunk in infamy.
To yield to love, to hearken to its cry,
Proved me unworthy of thy tenderness.

With sighs I tell thee o'er and o'er again,
And with my latest breath I still would say,
With cruel hand I've hurt thee, but naught else
Could blot my shame and leave me worthy thee.
Now, honour and my father satisfied,
To thee I come, to pay my final debt;
To offer thee my life, I seek thee here.
That duty done, this only rests to do.
Thou need'st not tell me that thy father slain
Arms thee against me—see, thy victim here!
Shrink not from offering up the blood of him
Who shed thy father's nor can mourn the deed.

Chimène. Ah! Roderick, strangely does my changeful heart
Defend thee who hast saved thy father's fame.
If my distracted mind has cruel seemed,
'Tis not with blame for thee, but in despair.
The ardour of a high, unbroken spirit
That can not brook an insult, well I know.
It was thy duty taught thee, but, alas!
In doing thine, thou teachest me mine own.
The very terror of thy deed compels;
For, as thy father's name thou hast restored,
Mine also calls upon his child for vengeance.
But, oh! my love for thee drives me to madness!
My father's loss by other hand had left
The solace of thy presence and thy love,
A consolation sweet in misery.
I still had felt in grief thy sympathy,
And loved the hand that wiped my tears away.
But now, in losing him thee too I lose;
This victory o'er my love his fame demands,
And duty, with the face of an assassin,
Drives me to work thy ruin and mine own.
For in my heart no more than in thine own
Must courage yield to luring dreams of love.
My strength must equal thine. In thine offence
Thou hast but proved thy worth. By thine own death
Alone can I be worthy of thy love.

Roderick. Defer no longer what thy cause demands.

It claims my head; I offer it to thee;
Make me the victim of thy just revenge.
I welcome the decree; I hail the stroke;
The tedious course of Justice to await
Retards thy glory, as my punishment.
'Tis welcome fate to die by thy dear hand.
Chimène. No, not thine executioner am I;
'Tis not for me to take thine offered life;
'Tis thine to make defence 'gainst my attack.
Some other hand than mine must work my will;
Challenge I must, but punish never, never!
Roderick. However love constrains thee for my sake,
Thy spirit must be equal to mine own,
Thyself hast said; then wouldst thou borrow arms
To avenge a father's death? Nay, my Chimène,
The soul of vengeance fails. No hand but mine
Could slay thy father; thine must punish me.
Chimène. O cruelty, to stand upon this point!
Thou didst not need my aid, I need not thine!
I follow thine example, and my spirit
Will never share with thee my glory's task.
My father's fame and I shall nothing owe
To love of thine, or to thy late despair.
Roderick. 'Tis thou that standest on a point of honour.
Shall I ne'er win this mercy at thy hand?
In thy dead father's name, for our love's sake,
In vengeance or in pity, slay me here!
Thy wretched lover keener pain will know
To live and feel thy hate than meet thy blow.
Chimène. Leave me, I hate thee not.
Roderick. 'Tis my desert.
Chimène. I can not.
Roderick. When my deed is fully known,
And men can say that still thy passion burns,
Dost thou not fear the cruel, stinging words
Of censure and of malice? Silence them;
Save thine own fame by sending me to death.
Chimène. My fame will shine the brighter for thy life.
The voice of blackest slander will lift up

My honour to the heavens, and mourn my griefs,
Knowing I love thee and yet seek thy life.
Go, vex no longer my poor, troubled soul
By sight of what I love and what I lose.
Hide thy departure in the shade of night;
For calumny may touch me, art thou seen;
The sole occasion for a slanderous word
Is, that I suffer thee within my house.
See that thou guard my virtue, and withdraw.

Roderick. Oh, let me die!

Chimène. Depart.

Roderick. What wilt thou do?

Chimène. The fires of wrath burn with the flames of love.
My father's death demands my utmost zeal;
'Tis duty drives me with its cruel goad,
And my dear wish is—nothing to achieve.

Roderick. O miracle of love!

Chimène. O weight of woe!

Roderick. We pay our filial debt in suffering!

Chimène. Roderick, who would have thought—

Roderick. Or could have dreamed—

Chimène. That joy so near so soon our grasp would miss?

Roderick. Or storm so swift, already close to port,
Should shatter the dear bark of all our hope?

Chimène. Oh, mortal griefs!

Roderick. Regrets that count for naught!

Chimène. Pray, leave me now; I can not longer hear.

Roderick. Adieu! I go to drag a dying life,
Till it is ended at thine own command.

Chimène. If my dire fate e'er bring that hour to me,
Thy breath and mine together will depart.
Adieu! and let no eye have sight of thee. [*Exit* RODERICK.

Elvire. Madam, whatever ills kind Heaven may send—

Chimène. Trouble me not; pray, leave me with my grief.
I long for night's dark silence, and for tears.

SCENE V

Dièguе. Never a perfect happiness is ours;
Our best achievements have their bitter drop;
In each event, whate'er its promise be,
Care troubles still the currents of our peace.
In my rejoicing o'er my honour saved,
An anxious fear now seizes on my soul.
The count whose hand affronted me is dead,
But now I seek in vain my avenger's face.
Hither and yon I strive, with labour vain,
To roam the city, broken as I am;
The remnant of my strength which age has left
Consumes itself in fruitless hours of search.
Each moment, in each place, I hear his voice,
I see his form—a shadow of the night.
I would embrace him—lo, he is not there!—
Till love, deceived, suspicious grows and fearful.
No marks of hasty flight do I discern,
And that strong troop of friends who served the count
Affrights me and suggests a thousand ills.
If Roderick lives, he breathes a dungeon's air.—
Just Heaven! do I deceive myself again?
Or do I see at last my hope, my son?
'Tis he! I doubt no more; my vows are heard,
My fears dispelled, my anxious longings o'er.

SCENE VI

DIÈGUE, RODERICK

Dièguе. At last, my Roderick, Heaven restores thee mine.
Roderick. Alas!
Dièguе. Mar not my new delight with sighs.
Let me find words to praise thee as I would;
My valour sees in thee no cause to blush,
But marks a kindred spirit; live in thee
The heroes of thy race, bold and renowned.
Thine ancestors are they, my son thou art.
Thine earliest sword-thrust equals all of mine;

Thine untaught youth, inspired by ardour great,
By this one effort, touches my renown.
Prop of my age, and crown of all my fortune,
On these white hairs lay thy redeeming hand;
Come, kiss this cheek where still thou canst behold
The mark of that affront thou hast avenged.

Roderick. The honour is your due; I could no less,
Your blood in mine, your care my school of arms.
Most happy am I that my maiden blow
Did not disgrace the author of my life.
But in your satisfaction do not shun
To grant me, also, what my soul demands.
Your words too long have silenced my despair,
Which bursts anew with every painful thought.
No mean regret for serving thee I feel;
But canst thou render back the price it cost?
My arm, for thee, I've raised against my love,
And with the stroke I cast away my all!
No more, no more; I owed you life itself;
That which I owed I've paid; your cause is won.

Dièguc. Nay, glory in the fruit of victory;
I gave thee life, life's joy I owe to thee.
By all that honour means to men like me,
Far more than life I owe thee in return.
But spurn this weakness from thy warlike breast;
Love is a pleasure summoned when thou wilt;
Thy soul's one rightful master is thine honour.

Roderick. What's this you teach me?

Dièguc. That which thou shouldst know.

Roderick. My outraged honour turns upon myself,
And now thou dar'st to counsel treachery—
Treason to her I love! Baseness is one,
Whether in craven knight or lover false.
Wrong not with breath of doubt my faithfulness;
To thee, to her, I would be wholly true.
Bonds such as mine can not be broken thus;
A promise lives, though hope be dead for aye.
I can not leave, nor can I win, Chimène;
In death I find my solace and my pain.

Diègue. This is no time for thee to prate of death.
Thy country and thy prince demand thine arm.
The fleet, whose coming has aroused our fears,
Plots to surprise and pillage all our towns.
The Moors invade, the night's advancing tide
All silently may float them to our walls.
The court is shaken, and the people tremble;
Terror and tears are seen on every side;
'Tis my good fortune, in this hour of need,
To find five hundred followers, ready armed
To avenge my quarrel, knowing my affront.
Their zeal thou hast prevented; now their hands
They shall dip deep in blood of Moorish chiefs.
Go, lead their line; assume thy rightful place.
This valiant band calls thee to be their head;
Front the assault of these old enemies;
If die thou wilt, seek there a noble death
In service of thy king and war's emprise.
Let the king owe his safety to thy loss.
Nay, but return, far rather, crowned with bays,
Thy fame not narrowed to a vengeful deed,
But broadened to a kingdom's strong defence.
Win silence from Chimène, grace from the king.
And if thou still wouldst gain her maiden heart,
Know that to conquering hero it will yield.
I waste thy time in words. Come, follow me;
Forth to the fight, and let thy sovereign see
What in the count he's lost he's gained in thee.

ACT IV

SCENE I

CHIMÈNE, ELVIRE

CHIMÈNE. Is this no false report?—art sure, Elvire?
Elvire. Should I repeat how all do sound his praise,
And bear to heaven the fame of his exploits,
And wonder at his youth, you'd scarce believe.
The Moors before him met a quick disgrace;
The attack was swift, but swifter still the flight.
After three hours of combat we had won
Two captive kings and victory secure;
Naught could resist the young chief's onset fierce.
Chimène. And Roderick's arm this miracle has wrought?
Elvire. Of his great prowess are two kings the prize,
Conquered and captured by his hand alone.
Chimène. How knowest thou the truth of this strange news?
Elvire. The people do extol him to the skies—
Call him their liberator and their angel,
The author and the guardian of their peace.
Chimène. The king, what thinks he of these mighty deeds?
Elvire. Not yet has Roderick braved the royal eye;
But the two captive kings, in fetters bound,
Still wearing crowns, Diègue with joy presents,
Entreating of the king, as recompense,
That he will see the conqueror and forgive.
Chimène. Is Roderick wounded?
Elvire. I've heard naught of it.
You lose your colour! pray take heart again.
Chimène. I'll take again my weak heart's failing wrath!
Must I forget myself in thought of him!
Shall my lips join in praises of his deeds!
While honour's mute, and duty, dull, consents?
Be still, my love, and let my anger swell!
What are two conquered kings? My father's slain!
This mourning garb, which speaks of my distress,
Is the first token of his wondrous might!

Others may call his deeds magnanimous;
Here, every object testifies his crime.
May all this sombre pomp which wraps me round—
This sweeping veil, these heavy depths of crape—
Add force to my resentment, fail it ever;
Nor let my love my honour overcome.
Should fond, alluring passion e'er prevail,
Recall my duty to my wavering mind,
And bid me fearless meet this hero proud.

Elvire. Calm yourself now; the Infanta is approaching.

SCENE II

THE INFANTA, CHIMÈNE, LEONORA, ELVIRE

Infanta. I come not vainly to console thy grief;
Rather my tears to mingle with thine own.

Chimène. Ah, madam, thou canst share the common joy;
'Tis thine to taste this Heaven-sent happiness;
The right to weep is mine, and mine alone.
The peril Roderick's wisdom could avert,
The public safety by his valour won,
Permit to me alone, to-day, a tear.
The city he has saved, the king has served—
His valorous arm brings woe to me alone.

Infanta. 'Tis true, Chimène, he has great marvels wrought.

Chimène. This grievous news already reaches me;
On every side I hear him loud proclaimed
Noble in war, unfortunate in love.

Infanta. Why shouldst thou suffer in this generous praise?
But now this youthful Mars delighted thee;
He dwelt within thy heart, he owned thy sway;
To tell his praises is to sound thine own.

Chimène. Others may boast his deeds; 'tis not for me;
His praises are but torture to my soul;
My anguish deepens with his rising fame;
My loss is greater as he greater grows.
Ah, cruel torture of a heart that loves!
My passion burns the brighter with his worth,
While duty, stern defender of my course,

Would follow him to death in love's despite.

Infanta. But yesterday thy duty's proud demands
Won from the court an admiration high,
So worthy of thy filial love it seemed;
Thy victory o'er thy passion was sublime;
But now—wilt have a faithful friend's advice?

Chimène. Not to hear you would show me base indeed.

Infanta. To-day thy duty wears a different face;
The chief support of a whole nation's life,
A people's love and hope, is Roderick now.
On him the Moors with hopeless terror gaze,
Securely leans on him our loved Castile.
The king himself can never now deny
Thy father's spirit moving in the youth;
Thou seek'st the public ruin in his death.
Thy country was thy father's country first,
And ne'er canst thou to hostile hands betray it.
Wilt thou pursue thy vengeance though its blow
Enwrap the kingdom in a fatal woe?
I plead not for thy lover; let thy heart
Cling to its filial ties; send him away,
And think no more of wedlock, but for us,
Thy country and thy king, preserve his life.

Chimène. The gift of mercy is not mine to grant;
I can not check the duty driving me;
Though in my heart the voice of love may plead,
Though prince and people praise him and adore,
Though all heroic souls encircle him—
My cypress-boughs his laurels shall o'erspread.

Infanta. 'Tis noble not to falter, my Chimène,
Though to avenge a father stabs our heart;
But 'tis a higher nobleness to place
The public good above all private wrong.
Believe me, to exclude him from thy soul
Will be the bitterest pang thou canst bestow.
Yield to the act thy country's weal demands,
Nor doubt thy king's most willing leniency.

Chimène. Whether he hear, I still must plead for justice.

Infanta. Consider well what course you now will take.

Adieu! let solitude thy counsel aid.

Chimène. My father dead!—what choice remains for me?

SCENE III

THE KING, DIÈGUE, ARIAS, RODERICK, SANCHO

King. Bold heir of an illustrious ancestry,
Ever the hope and glory of Castile,
Son of a race of valour unexcelled,
Whose best exploits thine own already rank,
For due reward my power is all too weak—
What thou hast earned thy king can never pay.
Our land set free from barbarous enemy,
My sceptre in my hand, by thine secured.
The Moors despatched before the call to arms
Had fully warned the people of attack—
Deeds such as these a king must ever find
Beyond the hope of suitable reward.
But thy two royal captives, they, in sooth,
In my own presence recognise thy might.
Their CID they name thee, sovereign, lord, and head.
I well might envy thee this title proud,
The highest in their land; but, no, I call
On all to know that thou the CID shalt be.
The CID henceforth art thou. To that great name
May every foe succumb!—Granada yield,
Toledo tremble, but on hearing it.
To all my subjects ever shall it show
How great the debt to thee we proudly owe.

Roderick. Nay, sire, your words too highly speak my praise,
And make me flush with shame before a king
Whose generous honour is so undeserved.
The blood within these veins, the air I breathe—
All, all, to this great empire do I owe.
Had these been lost, and death alone been won,
A subject's duty only had I done.

King. E'en duty done is not the whole of service;
Its glory is a courage quick and high,
Which, reckoning not with danger or defeat,

Pushes its way to triumph and renown.
Suffer thy praises from a grateful sovereign,
And now relate the story of thy deeds.

Roderick. That in this sudden stress of peril, sire,
A troop of followers of my father's house
Urged me to be their leader, well you know.
My troubled soul was painfully perplexed—
I dared not lead the band without thy word,
But to approach thee was a fatal step.
Pardon the rashness, sire, that dared to act!
I chose to lose my head in serving thee,
Rather than while my followers stood in arms.

King. The state defended is thy full defence,
And thy too heated vengeance I excuse.
Chimène, hereafter, has a cause forlorn;
I hear her but to comfort her; say on.

Roderick. I take the lead, and, with defiant front,
The little column slowly makes advance;
Five hundred at the starting, but ere long
Three thousand was our number, strong and bold.
The frightened gathered courage at the sight.
A certain part I hurriedly conceal
In vessels lying at the river's mouth;
The rest, whose numbers every hour increased,
Impatient for the fray, with me remain.
Close to the ground they crouched, and, still as death,
They passed the night, nor slept, nor scarcely breathed.
At my command, pretended, sire, from you,
The guard itself conceals, and aids my plot.
Just as the flow of tide comes rolling in,
By starlight pale, lo! thirty Moorish sails,
Mounting the wave, sweep to the harbour's mouth.
They enter; all seems tranquil; not a guard,
No soldiers on the quay, none on the walls.
Our ambush is complete, and fearlessly,
Not doubting their attack a full surprise,
They anchor, and debark; suspecting naught,
They rush into the embraces of their foes.
We spring from every hiding-place, and loud

A thousand cries of battle rise to heaven.
Then from the ships pour forth our armèd men;
But half have sprung to land when, terror-struck,
They see the fight is lost ere 'tis begun.
They came for pillage; they encounter war.
We press them on the water, on the land;
Their blood, in rivers, flows upon our soil,
While dire disorder hinders all resistance.
But soon their leaders rally them with shouts,
Their panic is dispelled, their ranks are formed,
Their terrors are forgotten in their fury.
To die without a struggle were a shame,
And bravely with their sabres they oppose.
On sea, on land, on fleet, within the port,
All was a field of carnage, death its lord.
Their blood and ours in horrid mixture ran.
Brave deeds were wrought which never will be known;
The darkness was a veil, 'neath which each man
Fought as it were alone; nor any knew
How victory inclined. I praised my men,
Placed re-enforcements here, changed orders there,
Nor knew till dawn which side was conqueror.
But day made clear our gain and their defeat.
Their courage fails them, with the fear of death;
And when they see approach a fresh command,
They seek their ships, cut cables, and their cries
Of terror and of anguish fill the air.
They wait not to discover if their kings
Are dead or wounded: in a tumult wild,
On the ebb-tide which bore them in at flood,
They take their desperate flight and quit our shores.
The kings and others, left without retreat
Or hope of succour, make a valiant stand;
They sell their lives at cost of life in turn,
And fight till nearly every man is dead.
I urge surrender, but they listen not,
Till the last follower falls, when yield they must.
Then the two kings demand to see the chief;
I tell them who I am, they seek my grace;

I send them straightway to your Majesty.
So the fight ended, lacking combatants.
'Twas in this manner, sire, that for your cause——

SCENE IV

The King, Dièguе, Roderick, Arias, Alonso, Sancho

Alonso. Chimène approaches, sire, to sue for justice.

King. 'Tis sorry news! a duty most untimely!
Go, for I would not force thee on her sight;
For sign of gratitude, I send thee hence;
But first receive thy monarch's kind embrace. [*Embraces him.*

[*Exit* Roderick.

Dièguе. Chimène would save him from her own pursuit.

King. 'Tis said she loves him still; I'll test her heart;
Assume a mournful air——

SCENE V

The King, Dièguе, Arias, Sancho, Alonso, Chimène, Elvire

King. Chimène, your wishes with success are crowned;
Our foes have fallen beneath Roderick's hand.
Give thanks to Heaven, which hath avenged you thus.

[*Aside to* Dièguе.

Mark how her colour changes at my words.

Dièguе. But see, she swoons, a token, sire, most sure,
Of perfect love; this grief the secret tells
Which rules her soul. No longer can you doubt
Her passion's flame still burns with glow unquenched.

Chimène Tell me, is Roderick dead?

King. Nay, nay, he lives,
And still his love unchanged for thee remains.
Forget the anxious grief that mourns for him.

Chimène. O sire, one swoons from joy as well as grief;
The soul surprised with happiness grows weak;
Too sudden gladness every sense o'erwhelms.

King. Thou canst not so deceive my watchful eye;
Thy grief, Chimène, too manifest appeared.

Chimène. Add, then, this deeper pain to my distress;
My swoon but told my disappointment sore;
My righteous wrath has brought me down to this.
His death would snatch him from my just revenge.
From wounds received in battle should he die,
What place remains for my unyielding will!
An end so honourable mocks my aim.
I wish him dead, but not with honour's stroke,
Not in a blaze of glory should he pass,
But on a scaffold, shrouded in disgrace.
Grant him a murderer's, not a patriot's death.
To die for country is a noble fate;
Not that for him, but with a blemished name,
A tarnished 'scutcheon, should his breath depart.
His victory gives me pleasure unalloyed—
The state gains stableness, and I, I gain
A victim worthier still my father's house.
No longer a rash youth, whose violence
Condemns itself; but great, chief among chiefs,
A warrior crowned with laurels, one whose fall
Would vindicate my purpose. But, alas!
My hopes beyond my reason bear me on.
What force is in my tears, which men despise?
The freedom of your empire is his own;
Under your power, he works his wicked will.
He from my feebleness has naught to fear,
O'er me, as o'er his enemies, he triumphs.
To stifle Justice in his victory
Makes a new trophy for this conqueror.
I serve his pomp when, trampling on the law,
He, with his captives, hears me speak his praise,
And from his car of triumph bids me follow.

King. My child, your words are all too violent;
The scales of justice must not swerve a hair.
Thy father was the aggressor; that thou know'st.
Justice must see that mercy has a claim.
Nay, be not swift to oppose thy monarch's plea;
Consult thy heart; there still thy Roderick lives.
Thy love, though hidden, is a mighty thing,

And will approve this favour from thy king.

Chimène. Favour to him a cause of thanks from me!
The author of my woes, my bitter foe!
Is anger o'er a father slain, and wrath
For the assassin, such a trifling thing
That I, forsooth, must grateful be to him
Who thinks to aid my cause by mocking it?
Since tears call forth no justice from my king,
Redress by arms I now, sire, will demand.
By arms alone my happiness was wrecked,
By arms alone my vengeance should be wrought.
Of all you cavaliers I ask his head;
To him who brings it, I will give my hand.
Confirm the combat, sire, by your decree;
I wed the man who conquers Roderick.

King. That ancient custom I would not restore.
The state was oft enfeebled 'neath its rule.
Under the false pretence of righting wrong,
The noblest oft would fall, the base escape.
A life whose import deepens to our state
Shall not be left to Fate's capricious whim;
From that ordeal of arms is Roderick free.
Whatever crime his hasty wrath has wrought
The flying Moors have borne with them afar.

Dièguе. What, sire, for him alone reverse the laws
Your court so oft has honoured by observance?
What will your people think, or envy say,
If 'neath your arm, a coward, he retreat,
Nor make redress upon the field of honour,
Where men of spirit seek a worthy death?
Such favours would but tarnish his renown.
Nay, let him drain unto the sweetest drops
The draught of triumph. Bravely did he front
The bragging count; he will be brave again.

King. Since you demand it, let it be; but know
A thousand warriors will replace the slain
By Roderick conquered; for the offered prize
Will make an eager foe of every knight.
To oppose them all would be a grievous wrong;

Once only shall he enter in the lists.
Choose whom thou wilt, Chimène, but choose with care;
No more reproaches will thy sovereign bear.

Dièguе. Let none be overlooked—not those who most
Do tremble at the prowess of his arm.
The deeds of valour wrought by him to-day
Will fright the boldest. Who would dare confront
A warrior so audacious and so keen?

Sancho. Declare an open field! I enter it.
Rash though I be, I dare confront this knight.
Madam, this favour grant to my devotion;
Your word's fulfilment shall I surely claim.

King. Chimène, do you accept this champion?

Chimène. It is a promise, sire.

King. To-morrow, then.

Dièguе. Nay, sire, why should there longer be delay?
The brave are ever ready. Now's the time.

King. He scarce has quit his battle with the Moors.

Dièguе. While in your presence he took breathing space.

King. An hour or two of respite I impose.
And lest this combat seem to speak my will—
To show the deep reluctance that I feel
In suffering this bloody pass at arms—
I and my court will straight withdraw us hence.
[*To* ARIAS.] You shall be judge between these combatants;
See that the laws of honour govern them.
The combat ended, lead to me the victor.
Whoe'er he be, the prize is still the same.
With mine own hand Chimène I would present,
And for his guerdon she her faith shall plight.

Chimène. What, sire, impose on me a law so stern?

King. Thou murmurest, but thy changeful, loving heart,
If Roderick wins, will gladly take his part.
Cease to complain of such a mild decree;
The victor shall thy husband surely be.

ACT V

SCENE I

RODERICK, CHIMÈNE

CHIMÈNE. What, Roderick! whence this boldness—to my face?
Go!—this will cost my honour. Leave me, pray.
Roderick. Madam, to death I go, but ere I die,
To offer you a last farewell I come.
The love that keeps me vassal to your laws
Even in death demands my homage still.
Chimène. And wilt thou die?
Roderick. I count the moment blest
That satisfies your hatred with my life.
Chimène. But wilt thou die? Sancho is not the one
To terrify that dauntless soul of thine!
What renders thee so weak, or him so strong?
Before the combat, Roderick talks of death!
He who nor feared my father nor the Moors,
Is going to fight one Sancho, and despairs!
Does courage thus desert thee, valorous knight?
Roderick. I haste to punishment, and not to combat.
Since you desire my death, what wish have I
To keep my life? My courage fails me not;
But my indifferent arm will not preserve
What thou dost find displeasing. Not a blow
Could I have struck against the fiery Moors
For wrong of mine alone; 'twas for my king,
His people, and his kingdom, that I fought.
To poorly guard myself were treachery.
Life is not yet so hateful to my heart
That basely I can sacrifice its claims.
The question now is different. I alone
Am in the balance. You demand my death;
Your sentence I accept, although the hand
You let inflict it should have been your own.
He who shall wield your weapon in your stead

Shall meet no sword-thrust answering to his steel.
I can not strike the man that fights for you;
I joy to think his blow is from your hand.
Since 'tis your honour that his arms maintain,
Unguarded shall I offer every point,
Seeing in his your hand which slays me thus.

Chimène. Let no blind folly lead thee to forget
That glory ends with life. Though my just wrath
Impels me to a course which I abhor,
And forces me to follow thee to death—
E'en though a sense of honour would demand
A nerveless arm, an undefended blow—
Remember, all the splendour of thy deeds
Will change to shame when death has conquered thee.
Who will believe thou didst not raise thy hand?
Though I am dear, honour is dearer still,
Else I had still my father, and the hope
That fatal blow has cost thee would remain—
The hope of calling me thine own Chimène.
Thou canst not hold so cheap thy high renown
To weakly, unresisting yield it up.
What strange inconstancy can valour show!
Thou shouldst have more or else thou shouldst have less!
Is it to grieve me only thou art bold,
And courage fails when courage I demand?
Wilt thou my father's might so disallow
That, conquering him, thou'lt to a weaker yield?
Go, do not will to die, o'ercome my will;
If life no longer charms thee, honour pleads.

Roderick. The count is dead, the Moors defeated fly—
Still other claims to glory need I prove?
Henceforth, my fame can scorn all self-defence.
None would believe this heart of mine could quail.
What can I not accomplish? Who will doubt
That, honour gone, naught dear to me remains?
No, doubt it if you will, this fatal fight
Increases not nor lessens my renown.
None e'er will dare my courage to impugn,
Nor deem that I did meet my conqueror.

"He loved Chimène"—'tis thus the court will say—
"He would not live and her resentment face.
To the stern hand of Fate that followed him—
Her vengeful hand—he yielded up his breath.
She sought his life; to his great soul it seemed
'Twould be ignoble did he care to live.
He lost his love to save his father's name;
He loses life for his dear mistress' sake.
Whate'er of hope his heart had cherished still,
Honour for love, and love for life, he chose."
'Twill not obscure my glory thus to die,
But brighter will its growing splendour shine.
My willing death this honour high will win,
No life but mine for thee redress could make.

Chimène. Since life and honour feebly plead my cause,
Nor stay thee from a death unwished by me,
Let mine old love speak for me, Roderick,
And, in return, shield me from Sancho's power.
Save me from such a fate as will be mine
If I, the prize, am won by him I hate.
Need I say more? Go, plan a sure defence,
Silence my wrath, my filial duty done.
Then, if thy heart still beats for thy Chimène,
As conqueror, thou lovest not in vain.
Adieu! my cheek is hot at this avowal.

Roderick. [*Alone.*] What foe can daunt my valiant spirit now?
Come on, Navarre, Morocco, and Castile!
Come, all the valour of our kingdom's might!
In one great host unite to hurl me down!
My arm alone will equal all your force.
Against a hope so sweet, the flower of Spain
Were all too weak! I fight for my Chimène!

SCENE II

Infanta. Thou pride of birth, which turns my love to crime,
Thy warning shall I list, or thy sweet voice
My heart, whose soft constraint compels revolt
Against that tyrant stern? In worth alone

Thou, Roderick, art mine equal; but thy blood,
Though brave and pure, flows not from royal veins.

Unhappy lot, which rudely separates
My duty and my love. Must loyalty
To valour rare condemn to misery
A loving soul? What anguish must I bear
If ne'er I learn, despite my high resolve,
Nor lover to embrace, nor love to quell!

'Twixt love and pride my reason bids me choose
Though birth's high destiny demand a throne,
Thou, Roderick, art of kings the conqueror,
And 'neath thy sway with honour shall I dwell.
The glorious name of Cid that now is thine
Points clearly to the realm where thou shalt reign.

Worthy is he, but 'tis Chimène he loves.
Her father's death so slightly breaks their bonds,
That, though her duty slays him, she adores.
No hope to my long grief his crime can bring.
Alas for me! ordains a wretched fate
That love outlast the bitterness of hate.

SCENE III

THE INFANTA, LEONORA

Infanta. Why com'st thou, Leonora?
Leonora. 'Tis to praise thee,
That thou at last hast conquered all thy pain,
And hast repose.
Infanta. Repose? whence shall that come
To a heart burdened with a hopeless woe?
Leonora. Love lives on hope; without it, surely dies.
No more can Roderick's image charm your heart;
For whether in this combat he prevail,
Or whether fall, he is her victim still.
Your hope is dead, your wounded heart is healed.
Infanta. That time—how distant still!

Leonora. Why mock yourself?

Infanta. Say, rather, why forbid me still to hope?
I can invent a thousand happy shifts
This combat's hard conditions to evade.
Love tortures me, but 'tis from love I learn
To use a lover's skilful artifice.

Leonora. The flame of love, enkindled in their hearts,
Survives a father slain. What, then, can you?
No deadly hate inspires Chimène's pursuit.
She claims a combat, but she straight accepts
The combatant who offers first his sword.
None does she choose among the valiant knights
Whose bold exploits match Roderick's own renown.
A youth whose steel has never yet been tried
Suits her cause well—young Sancho is her choice.
His highest merit is his unskilled blade.
Without a name, no fame has he to save;
And this too easy choice full plainly shows
This combat is but duty's weak pretence.
To Roderick she gives a victim sure,
Whose harmless death her honour seems to crown.

Infanta. I read her plan, and still this restless heart
Rivals Chimène, and loves this conqueror.
Unhappy that I am! what shall I do?

Leonora. Recall the high conditions of your birth.
Shall a king's daughter love her father's subject?

Infanta. My love has changed its object; listen, pray!
It is no longer Roderick I love,
A simple gentleman; not so, not so!
I love the author of most noble deeds,
The valorous Cid, the conqueror of two kings.
But still my love I'll conquer; not in fear,
But lest their sweet devotion I betray.
If for my sake a crown he should receive,
I would not take again the gift I gave.
Since to no doubtful combat he is gone,
Another happy scheme must I employ.
Do thou, the confidant of all my woes,
Help me to finish what I have begun.

SCENE IV

CHIMÈNE, ELVIRE

Chimène. Elvire, I suffer—pity, pity me!
I can but hope, yet everything I fear.
A vow escapes me I would fain withdraw;
A swift repentance follows every wish.
Two rivals for my sake are now at arms;
Of dear success my tears the price will pay.
Though Fate may seem to grant my great desire,
I still must carry in my heart the pain
Of father unavenged or lover dead.

Elvire. Nay, 'tis of consolation you must dream.
Your lover or your vengeance is assured.
Whatever issue destiny decrees,
Your honour and a husband are your own.

Chimène. What! him I hate, or him I've wished to slay!
The murderer of my father, or of Roderick?
The victory of either gives to me
A husband stained with blood that I adore.
From this most wretched choice my soul revolts.
Far more than death I dread this quarrel's end.
Hence, vengeance, love, disturbers of my peace!
I can no longer pay your cruel price.
Almighty author of my direful fate,
Bring thou this combat to no certain close—
Let there be neither conqueror nor conquered.

Elvire. Nay, wish not a result so profitless.
If still you cherish Justice' stern demands,
And still your deep resentment you would nurse,
Unsatisfied, because your lover lives,
This combat will but torture you anew.
Far rather hope his valour may secure
New bays for him, and silence for your plaints;
That by the law of combat, still revered,
Your sighs be stifled and your heart consoled.

Chimène. To him, though conqueror, think'st thou I will yield?
Too strong my duty, and my loss too dear.

No law of combat, nor the king's decree,
Can force a daughter's conscience to be quiet.
An easy victory he may win in fight,
Chimène will prove an adversary still.

Elvire. 'Twere well if Heaven prevent your vengeance just,
To punish pride so strange and impious!
What! will you now the happiness reject
Of silence with your honour reconciled?
What means such duty? Pray, what hope you for?
Your lover slain, will't give your father back?
Does one such sorrow not suffice for you?—
Must you heap loss on loss, and grief on grief?
'Tis a caprice of temper you indulge,
Which of your promised lord makes you unfit.
The wrath of Heaven will snatch him from your arms,
And leave you as young Sancho's rightful bride.

Chimène. Elvire, the conflicts which my soul endures
Pray deepen not by prophecy malign.
Would Heaven ordain I might escape them both;
If not, for Roderick all my vows ascend.
Not that my foolish love inclines me thus,
But Sancho's prize I can not, can not be!
That fear o'ermasters every wish besides.
What is't I see? Undone!—I am undone!

SCENE V

SANCHO, CHIMÈNE, ELVIRE

Sancho. 'Tis mine this sword to offer at your feet.

Chimène. What! dripping still with Roderick's life-blood pure?
Perfidious wretch! how dar'st thou show thyself
To me, of my dear love by thee bereft?
Burst forth, my love! no longer need'st thou fear!
My father's death restrains thee nevermore;
By one fell blow my honour is assured,
My love set free, my soul plunged in despair.

Sancho. With calmer mind——

Chimène. Thou speak'st to me again!

Assassin of a hero I adore!
Away! thou wast a traitor! Well I know
That valiant knight by thee was never slain
In open combat. Nothing hope from me.
My champion thou!—my death thou'lt surely be!
Sancho. What strange illusion! Hear me, I entreat!
Chimène. Think'st thou I'll listen to thy bragging tale—
With patience bear thine insolence which paints
His fall, my crime, and, chiefest still, thy valour?

SCENE VI

THE KING, DIÈGUE, ARIAS, SANCHO, ALONSO, CHIMÈNE, ELVIRE

Chimène. Ah, sire, no more need I dissimulate
What vainly I have struggled to conceal.
I loved; 'twas known to you; but for my father
I could devote to death so dear a head.
Love, sire, to duty's desperate cause I gave.
Now Roderick is dead, my heart is changed
From foe relentless to afflicted lover.
To him who gave me life was vengeance due;
But now my tears can fall for him I love.
Young Sancho in defending me destroys,
And of his murderous arm I am the prize.
In pity, sire, if pity move a king,
Revoke a law so terrible to me!
As recompense for victory, whose end
To me is loss of all on earth I love,
All that I have is his; myself, I pray,
May to a holy cloister now retire,
Where death shall find me weeping life away.
Dièguc. No longer, sire, it seems to her a shame
To openly avow her heart's desire.
King. Be undeceived, Chimène: thy Roderick lives!
The champion has, though vanquished, told thee false.
Sancho. 'Twas her too hasty thought deceived herself.
To tell the issue of the fight I came—
How the brave warrior who her heart enchains,

After disarming me, thus nobly spoke:
"Fear naught! I'd leave the combat all in doubt,
Rather than pierce a heart that loves Chimène.
My duty summons me at once to court.
Do thou convey to her the final chance,
And lay thy sword, her trophy, at her feet."
This had I done, but seeing me return,
Bearing my sword, she deemed me conqueror.
Then love and anger, mingled suddenly,
Betrayed her into transports uncontrolled,
Nor could I gain a hearing for my tale.
Vanquished in combat, still I am content,
And gratefully accept my own defeat;
For though I love and lose my love, 'tis sweet
This perfect love of theirs to consummate.

King. My child, no flush of shame should mount thy cheek.
No longer seek to disavow thy flame.
Thy faithful love unmeasured praise shall win,
Thy honour's safe, thy filial duty done.
Thy father is avenged; to do thy will
Thy Roderick's life thou hast in peril set.
'Twas Heaven ordained to save him for thine own;
Thou hast not shunned thy part; take thy reward;
Be not rebellious toward my wise decree,
Thy lover in thy loving arms enfold.

SCENE VII

The King, Diègue, Arias, Roderick, Alonso, Sancho, Infanta, Chimène, Leonora, Elvire

Infanta. No longer weep, Chimène. With joy receive
This noble conqueror from thy princess' hand.

Roderick. I crave indulgence, sire, that love's high claim
Impels me, in thy presence, to her feet.—
To ask no promised prize, Chimène, I come,
But once again my life to offer thee.
My love can not for thee obey alone
The code of honour or a sovereign's will.
If still your father's death seem unavenged,

But speak your wish; you shall be satisfied.
A thousand rivals I will yet o'ercome,
To utmost bounds of earth I'll fight my way.
Alone I'll force a camp, an army rout,
The fame of demigods I'll cast in shade;
Whate'er the deeds my crime to expiate,
All things will I attempt and all achieve.
But if the voice of honour unappeased
Still clamours for the guilty slayer's death,
Arm not against me warrior such as I.
My head is at your feet: strike now the blow!
You only can o'ercome the invincible;
No other hand than yours can vengeance take.
One thing I pray: let death end punishment;
From your dear memory ne'er banish me.
Your honour is exalted in my death;
As recompense let my remembrance live.
Say sometimes, thinking of my love for you,
"He died, because he ne'er could be untrue."

Chimène. Nay, Roderick, rise.—Ah, sire, no more I hide
The feelings which have burst their long control.
His virtues high compel my heart to love.
A king commands; obedience is his due;
Yet, though my fate is sealed by sentence stern,
Can you with eye approving give consent?
If duty drive me on to do your will,
Can justice the unnatural act confirm?
For Roderick's service to his monarch's cause
Must I, the guerdon, though reluctant, be?
A prey forever to remorseful shame
That in paternal blood my hands I've stained.

King. Time changes all; a deed to-day unmeet,
May seem hereafter lawful and benign.
Thou hast been won by Roderick; thou art his.
This day his valour rightly gained the prize.
But since so freshly from the field he comes,
And still thy heart unreconciled remains,
I well might seem thy fair fame's enemy,
If I so soon reward his victory.

My law decreed no hour for nuptial vows,
Nor does delay show change in royal will.
Let a round year bring solace to thy heart,
And dry the fountain of a daughter's tears.—
For thee, brave knight, wait mighty deeds of arms:
The Moors on our own borders thou hast slain,
Their plots confounded, their assaults repelled;
Now into their own country push the war,
Command my army, plunder all their land.
Thy name of Cid their terrors will inflame;
Themselves have given it—king they'll choose thee now.
Fidelity is valour's noblest crown;
Return yet worthier of this lovely maid.
Let thy great deeds so loudly plead for thee,
That pride and love will join to make her thine.

Roderick. To win Chimène and serve my glorious king,
My arm is iron and my heart is flame.
Though absence from her eyes I must endure,
I thank you, sire, for hope's unfailing bliss.

King. Thy valour and my word assure thy hopes;
Her heart already is confessed thine own.
The filial honour that resists thee now,
To time, thy king, and thy high deeds will bow.

TARTUFFE

BY

JEAN BAPTISTE POQUELIN MOLIÈRE

Jean Baptiste Poquelin Molière was born in Paris, probably in the Rue St. Honoré, in January, 1622; he was baptized on January 15th. His father, Jean Poquelin, was a well-to-do tradesman, an upholsterer, and held a place in the king's household. His mother, Marie Cressé, died when he was ten years old, leaving a considerable fortune. Molière studied at the Jesuit Collége de Clermont, under Grassendi, the philosopher, and under the regular teachers of law. He inherited a large share of his mother's money, and immediately joined the Béjarts, a family of professional actors, in the dramatic venture of L'Illustre Théâtre. Their first attempt, in Paris (1643–1646), was a failure, and in 1646 they turned to the provinces, where they appear to have met with fair success. They played before the king, October 24, 1658, and shortly afterward, with Molière as manager, organized, first in the Petit Bourbon, then in the Palais Royal, the regular theatre with which he was connected for the next busy fourteen years. While in the provinces Molière had written many plays, of which only "La Jalousi du Barbouillé" and "Le Médecin Volant" survive. The former was admirably worked over in "George Dandin," and probably much from these earlier pieces appears in his later and greater comedies. He had also written "L'Étourdi" and "Le Dépit Amoureux," in which he first appeared in Paris. In November, 1659, appeared his "Les Précieuses Ridicules," the first attempt on the French stage at satire on contemporary manners. This was Molière's first great success. "Don Garcie de Navarre" (1661), his only attempt at serious drama, was his only failure. In 1662 he married Armande Béjart, an actress in his own company, nineteen years old, the sister of Madeline, Geneviève, and Joseph Béjart, his old comrades of L'Illustre Théâtre. Scandal has busied itself much over this marriage, as it has also over Molière's relations with Madeline Béjart; but his own intense jealousy appears to have been the chief cause of unhappiness, if there was any. Molière and his work were well appreciated by the best judges; he lived well, and was a friend of the king; but during his whole life he was the object of the severest animosities, which grew out of his unfortunate though not altogether unjust quarrel with Racine, his merciless attacks on the quackery of the doctors, and his unsparing ridicule of religious hypocrisy in "Tartuffe." He died, February 7, 1673, at his house in the Rue de Richelieu, from the breaking of a blood-vessel, after he had struggled through the seventh performance of "Le Malade Imaginaire," in the title part. He was buried, not without opposition from the Church, in the churchyard of St. Joseph; but his tomb can not be identified. The following is a complete list of his plays, with the date of their appearance: The two farces, "La Jalousie du Barbouillé" and "Le Médecin Volant," written during the tour of the provinces; "L'Étourdi" (1653?), and "Le Dépit Amoureux" (1656?), first produced in Paris in 1658; "Le Précieuses Ridicules" (1659); "Sganarelle" (1660); "Don Garcie de Navarre" (1661); "L'École des Maris" (1661); "Les Fâcheux" (1661); "L'École des Femmes" (1662); "La Critique de l'École des Femmes" (1663); "Impromptu de Versailles" (1663); "Le Mariage Forcé" (1664); "La Princesse d'Élide" (1664); "Tartuffe" (1664, partially); "Le Festin de Pierre" [Don Juan] (1665); "L'Amour Médecin" (1665); "Le Misanthrope" (1666); "Le Médecin Malgré Lui" (1666); "Melicerte" (1666); "Le Sicilien" (1666); "Tartuffe" (1668, fully, but stopped after first night); "Amphitryon" (1668); "George Dandin" (1668); "L'Avare" (1668); "Tartuffe" (1669, at last fully); "Monsieur de Pourceaugnac" (1669); "Les Amants Magnifiques" (1671); "Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme" (1671); "Les Fourberies de Scapin" (1671); "La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas" (1672); "Les Femmes Servantes" (1672); "Le Malade Imaginaire" (1673). He also contributed part of the opera "Psyche" (1671) with Corneille and Quinault, arranged several court-masques, and wrote a few miscellaneous poems.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Orgon, husband to Elmire.
Damis, his son.
Valère, betrothed to Marianne.
Cléante, brother-in-law to Orgon.
Tartuffe.
Mr. Loyal, bailiff.
A Police Officer.
Elmire, wife to Orgon.
Madame Pernelle, mother to Orgon.
Marianne, Orgon's daughter, betrothed to Valère.
Dorine, maid to Marianne.
Flipote, servant to Mme. Pernelle.

The Scene is in Paris, in the House of Orgon

TARTUFFE; OR, THE IMPOSTOR

ACT I

SCENE I

MADAME PERNELLE, ELMIRE, MARIANNE, DAMIS, CLÉANTE, DORINE, FLIPOTE

PERNELLE. Come along, Flipote, come along, let me get away from them all.

Elmire. You go so fast that one can hardly keep up with you.

Per. Never mind, daughter, never mind; come no farther; I can well dispense with these ceremonies.

El. We acquit ourselves of our duty toward you. But, mother, may I ask why you are in such a hurry to leave us?

Per. For the simple reason that I can not bear to see what goes on in your house, and that no effort is made to comply with my wishes. Yes, I leave your house very ill edified. Things are done against all my admonitions; there is no respect paid to anything; every one speaks out as he likes, and it is exactly like the court of King Petaud.[1]

Dorine. If——

Per. You, a servant, are a great deal too strong in the jaw, most rude, and must have your say about everything.

Damis. But——

[1] King Petaud, the name which the corporation of beggars used to give in old times to their chief. The word comes, perhaps, from the Latin peto, I ask.

Per. You are, in good round English, a fool, my child. I, your grandmother, tell you so; and I always forewarned your father that you would turn out a worthless fellow, and would never bring him anything but vexation.

Marianne. I think——

Per. And you, his sister, are all demureness, and look as if butter would not melt in your mouth. But it is truly said that still waters run deep, and on the sly you lead a life which I thoroughly dislike.

El. But, mother——

Per. I should be sorry to vex you, my daughter, but your conduct is altogether unbecoming; you ought to set them a good example; and their late mother did much better. You spend money too freely; and I am shocked to see you go about dressed like a princess. She who wishes to please her husband only has no need of such finery.

Cléante. But, madam, after all——

Per. As for you, her brother, I esteem you greatly, I love and respect you, sir; but all the same if I were in my son's her husband's place, I would beg of you most earnestly never to enter the house. You always advocate rules of life that honest folks ought not to follow.—I am a little outspoken, but such is my disposition, and I never mince matters when I have something on my mind.

Dor. Your Tartuffe is very fortunate, no doubt, in——

Per. He is a very worthy man, to whom you would do well to listen, and I can't bear, without getting into a passion, to see him molested by a scapegrace like you.

Da. What! can I allow a strait-laced bigot to assume a tyrannical authority in this house; and that we should never think of any pleasure unless we are assured of that fine gentleman's consent.

Dor. According to him and his maxims, we can do nothing without committing a sin; for the zealous critic superintends everything.

Per. And whatever he superintends is well superintended. It is the way to Heaven he wants to show you, and my son should make you all love him.

Da. No, mother, there is no father nor anything in the world

that can induce me to wish him well, and I should be false to my own heart if I spoke otherwise. Everything he does excites my wrath, and I foresee that some day or other something will happen, and that I shall be forced to come to an open quarrel with the sneaking scoundrel.

Dor. Indeed it is most scandalous to see a stranger come and make himself at home here; most scandalous that a beggar who had no shoes to his feet when he first came, and whose coat was not worth three halfpence, should so far forget himself as to interfere with everything and play the master!

Per. Ah! mercy on us! It would be much better if everything were managed according to his pious directions.

Dor. Yes, he is a saint in your opinion; but depend upon it, he is really nothing but a downright hypocrite.

Per. What backbiting!

Dor. I should trust neither him nor his Laurent without good security, I can tell you.

Per. I don't know what the servant may really be; but I'll answer for the master being a holy man. You hate him and reject him because he tells you of your faults. It is against sin that he is incensed, and there is nothing he has so much at heart as the interest of Heaven.

Dor. Has he? Why, then, and particularly of late, is he angry when any one comes near us? In what does a polite visit offend Heaven, that he should make a disturbance enough to drive us mad? Shall I tell you here privately what I think? [*Pointing to* ELMIRE.] I really believe that he is, in good faith, —jealous of madam!

Per. Hold your tongue, and mind what you are saying! He is not the only one who blames these visits. All the confusion which accompanies the people you receive, those carriages always waiting at the gate, the noisy crowd of lackeys, disturb the whole neighbourhood. I am most willing to believe that there is really no harm done; but, in short, it gives people occasion to talk, and that is not right.

Clé. Ah! madam, would you hinder people from talking? It would be a sad thing if in this world we had to give up our best friends because of some stupid story in which we may play a part. But even if we could bring ourselves to do such a

thing, do you think it would force people to be silent? There is no safeguard against calumny. Let us, therefore, not mind all that foolish gossip, but only endeavour to lead a virtuous life, and leave full license to the scandal-mongers.

Dor. Are not Daphné, our neighbour, and her small husband, those who have been speaking evil of us? The people whose conduct offers the greatest hold to ridicule are always the first to speak unkindly of others. They never fail to catch at the least sign of a mutual esteem to spread far and wide the news with glee, and to give it the meaning they wish people to credit. By giving to the actions of others the colour that belongs to their own, they think to justify their conduct to the world; and under the delusive hope of some resemblance, to give their own intrigues a look of innocence, or cause to fall elsewhere a part of the blame of which they have too heavy a share.

Per. All these reasonings are beside the mark. Everybody, for instance, knows that Orante leads an exemplary life, that her thoughts are of heaven only; now, I have heard say that she has not a very high opinion of the people who visit here.

Dor. The example is well chosen, and the lady is really too good! It is true she leads an austere life, but age has brought that ardent zeal, and we know that she is a prude, because she could hardly be anything else. As long as it was in her power to make conquests, she profited largely by all her advantages; but now, aware that her eyes have lost their lustre, she, forsooth, renounces the world which forsakes her, and under the specious veil of great discretion hides the decay of her worn-out charms. This is the way with coquettes nowadays; it is misery to them to be deserted by their lovers, and when thus left to themselves they see no other loophole of escape from gloomy despair than prudishness. The worthy women censure everything with severity, and forgive nothing; they loudly blame everybody's way of living, not out of motives of charity, but because, through envy, they can not bear to see another enjoy pleasures of which age deprives them.[1]

[1] An allusion to the Duchess of Nouailles, who owed her elevation to a life of intrigue during the wars of the Fronde. She had a grating put at

Per. [*To* ELMIRE.] This, daughter, is the idle nonsense that pleases you. I am of necessity forced to be silent in your house, for this lady has the privilege of talking all day long; yet I will not be beaten, and you shall hear me in my turn. I tell you that my son never acted more wisely than when he took this holy man into his family; that Heaven, in its mercy, has sent him in time to reclaim your minds from error. It is for your salvation that he is here, and he reproves nothing but what deserves reproof. These visits, these balls, and this idle talk are all begotten of the evil one. There you never hear any pious conversation, but only tittle-tattle and nonsensical, foolish things. Often, also, our neighbours come in for a share, and there is evil-speaking about everybody. In short, sensible people lose their senses in the confusion of such gatherings. A thousand idle stories are started in a moment, and it was well said the other day by a good doctor, that it is a perfect Babel; for every one there jabbers till he can jabber no more. And in order to explain how this remark came—— [*Pointing to* CLÉANTE.] There, do you see that gentleman giggling already? Go and find the fools who give you cause to laugh; and without—— [*To* ELMIRE.] Farewell to you, daughter. I won't speak a word more. Know that I don't think half as much of your home as I once did, and that it will be many a long day before you catch me in here again. [*Giving a box on the ear to* FLIPOTE.] Come along; what are you dreaming and gaping about there? Holy Virgin! I'll warm your ears for you. Come along, you hussy; come along, I say.

SCENE II

CLÉANTE, DORINE

Clé. No, I won't follow her, for fear she should abuse me again. How the old woman——

Dor. It is a pity she does not hear you call her so. She would soon tell you her mind about what she thinks of you, and that she is not of an age to call forth such a remark from you.

the entrance of the apartment of the maids of honour, to prevent the king from visiting Mademoiselle de Lamothe Hondancourt. (See Louandre.)

Clé. What a passion she got in about nothing, and how mad she is after her Tartuffe!

Dor. Yes, indeed. But all this is nothing compared to the infatuation of her son; if you could but see him, you would soon say that it was worse and worse! Our civil troubles[1] had given Orgon the reputation of a man of sense, and he showed courage while serving his king; but since he is thus besotted with his Tartuffe, he has almost become silly. He calls him "brother," and in his inmost soul loves him a hundred times more than either mother, son, daughter, or wife. He makes him the only confidant of all his secrets, and the prudent adviser of all his actions. He caresses him, kisses him, and no one could show a stronger affection for any lady-love. When at table he insists upon his occupying the place of honour, and is quite delighted to see him gulp down as much as half a dozen people. The very best cuts are for him, and if the hiccough disturbs him, our master gives him a "God bless you!" In a word, he dotes upon him, he is everything to him—his hero. He admires all his actions, quotes him on all occasions, looks upon every trivial thing he does as a wonder, and every word he says as the sayings of an oracle. Tartuffe, who understands his man, and means to make his profit by him, knows how to impose on him in a hundred different ways; by his cant he extorts money from him, and, on the strength of his hypocritical bigotry, takes upon himself to reprove the whole family. Even that jack-anapes of a boy who acts as a servant to him, dares to find fault with us; he comes and sermonizes us with fierce, indignant looks, and throws away our ribbons, rouge, and patches. The wretch the other day tore a handkerchief to pieces, because he had found it folded in a "Flower of the

[1] In order to succeed in having "Tartuffe" brought on the stage, Molière was forced to have recourse to many expedients. The first thing was to put the king on his side, and in the fifth act the king is really the Deus ex machina of the play. This allusion to the civil troubles of the Fronde was also meant to please him; for the king could never forgive those who had taken part with the Coadjutor. If "the civil troubles had given Orgon the reputation of a man of sense," it was understood that he had fought against the Coadjutor for his king, who ultimately is made to reward him for it. (See Act V.)

Saints,"[1] saying that we were committing the abominable sin of mixing holiness with the adornments of hell.

SCENE III

ELMIRE, MARIANNE, DAMIS, CLÉANTE, DORINE

El. [*To* CLÉANTE.] You are very fortunate not to have accompanied her to the door to have heard the things she said to us. But I just caught sight of my husband; and as he did not see me, I must go and wait upstairs for his coming, and only say good morning to him.

Clé. I will stop here some time.

SCENE IV

CLÉANTE, DAMIS, DORINE

Da. Speak to him a little about my sister's marriage. I have an idea that Tartuffe is opposed to it, and that it is he who puts my father up to all those trying evasions. You know how I am interested in the matter. If love unites my sister and Valère, his sister also is very dear to me; and if it must——

Dor. Here he is.

SCENE V

ORGON, CLÉANTE, DORINE

Orgon. Ah! good morning, brother.

Clé. I was just going away, but I am glad to see you back. The fields are not very green just now, are they?

Org. Dorine—— [*To* CLÉANTE.] Brother, pray excuse me; you will kindly allow me to allay my anxiety by asking news of the family. [*To* DORINE.] Has everything gone on well these last two days? What has happened? How is everybody?

Dor. The day before yesterday our mistress was very feverish from morning to night, and suffered from a most extraordinary headache.

Org. And Tartuffe?

[1] A book written by a celebrated Spanish Jesuit, and translated into French.

Dor. Tartuffe! He is wonderfully well, stout and fat, with blooming cheeks and ruddy lips.

Org. Poor man!

Dor. In the evening she felt very faint, and the pain in her head was so great that she could not touch anything at supper.

Org. And Tartuffe?

Dor. He ate his supper by himself before her; and very devoutly devoured a brace of partridges and half a leg of mutton hashed!

Org. Poor man!

Dor. She spent the whole of the night without getting one wink of sleep; she was very feverish, and we had to sit up with her until the morning.

Org. And Tartuffe?

Dor. Overcome by a pleasant sleepiness he passed from the table to his room, and got at once into his warmed bed, where he slept comfortably till the next morning.

Org. Poor man!

Dor. At last yielding to our persuasions, she consented to be bled, and immediately felt relieved.

Org. And Tartuffe?

Dor. He took heart right valiantly, and fortifying his soul against all evils, to make up for the blood which our lady had lost, drank at breakfast four large bumpers of wine.

Org. Poor man!

Dor. Now at last, they are both well; and I will go and tell our lady how glad you are to hear of her recovery.

SCENE VI

ORGON, CLÉANTE

Clé. She is laughing at you to your face, brother; and although I am far from wishing to vex you, I must say that she is right. Was ever such a whim heard of before? Is it possible that you should be so infatuated with a man as to forget everything for him? And, after having saved him from want, that you should come to——

Org. Not a word more, brother, for you do not know the man you are speaking of.

Clé. I do not know him, if you like, but in order to see what kind of man he is——

Org. Brother, you would be delighted with him, if you knew him; and you would never get over your wonder. He is a man who——ah! a man——in short, a man. Whoever carefully follows his precepts lives in most profound peace, and all the rest of the world is but dross to him. Yes, I am quite another man since I became acquainted with him. He teaches me to have no affection for anybody, he detaches my heart from all the ties of this world; and I should see my brother, children, mother, and wife die, without caring about it.

Clé. Humane feelings these, brother!

Org. Ah! if you had only seen him when I first met him, you would feel for him the same love that I have. He came every day to church, and with gentle looks knelt down straight before me on both his knees. He attracted the attention of the whole congregation by the ardour with which, wrapped in saintly ecstasy, he sent up his prayer to Heaven. He sighed deeply, and every moment humbly kissed the ground. When I went out, he would steal quickly before me to offer me holy water at the door. Having heard through his servant, who imitates him in everything, of his poverty and who he is, I made him small presents, but he, with the greatest modesty, always returned me part of it: "It is too much," he would say, "too much by half, I do not deserve your pity"; and when I refused to take it back again, he went, before my eyes, to distribute it to the poor. At last Heaven moved me to take him into my house, and since then everything has been prospering here. I see that he reproves everything, and, with regard to my wife, takes extreme care of my honour. He warns me of the people who cast loving eyes upon her, and is a dozen times more jealous of her than I am. You would never believe how far he carries his pious zeal. He accuses himself of sin for the slightest thing imaginable; a mere trifle is enough to shock him; so much so, that the other day he blamed himself for having caught a flea while at his prayers, and for having killed it with too much wrath.

Clé. You are crazy, brother, I believe! Are you laughing

at me with such stuff? What is it you mean? All this foolery——

Org. Brother, what you say savours of freethinking; you are somewhat tainted with it; and, as I have told you again and again, you will draw some heavy judgment upon your head.

Clé. Tut! This is the usual way of talking with such as you. They want everybody to be as blind as they are; to see clearly is to be a freethinker; and not to worship empty show is to act from a want of faith and of respect for holy things. Believe me, all your denunciations do not frighten me; I know what I say, and God sees my heart. I am no dupe of all your formalists. Devotion, like courage, has its pretenders; and in the same way that the truly brave are not those who make the most noise where honour leads them, so the real and truly pious men whose example we ought to follow, are not those who affect such grimaces. What! will you make no distinction between hypocrisy and true religion? Will you call them both by the same name, and render the same homage to the mask as to the face? Will you put on the same level falsehood and sincerity, and confound appearance with reality? Will you esteem the shadow as much as the substance, and false coin as much as good? Men are really strange beings; they never keep to simple Nature. The bounds of reason seem too narrow for them, and in every character they overact their parts; they often spoil even the noblest thing by exaggeration. This to yourself, by the way, brother.

Org. Yes, you are doubtless a doctor revered by all; all the knowledge of the world has taken its abode in you; you are the only wise and enlightened man—the oracle, the Cato of the present age; and all men compared to you are fools.

Clé. No, I am not a revered doctor, brother; no, all the knowledge of this world has not found its abode in me. I have merely the science of discerning truth from falsehood. And as I know nothing in the world so noble and so beautiful as the holy fervour of genuine piety, so there is nothing, I think, so odious as the whitewashed outside of a specious zeal; as those downright impostors, those hireling-bigots[1] whose

[1] Dévots de place, a word coined by Molière. Compare voitures de place —cabs found at cabstands. In the seventeenth century servants were

sacrilegious and deceitful grimaces impose on others with impunity, and who trifle as they like with all that mankind holds sacred; those men who, wholly given to mercenary ends, trade upon godliness, and would purchase honour and reputation at the cost of hypocritical looks and affected groans; who, seized with strange ardour, make use of the next world to secure their fortune in this; who, with great affectation and many prayers, daily preach solitude and retirement while they themselves live at court; who know how to reconcile their zeal with their vices; who are passionate, revengeful, faithless, full of deceit, and who, to work the destruction of a fellow-man, insolently cover their fierce resentment with the cause of Heaven. They are so much the more dangerous in that they, in their bitter wrath, use against us those weapons which men revere; and their anger, which everybody lauds, assassinates us with a consecrated weapon. There are too many such mean hypocrites in the world; but from them the truly pious are easy to distinguish. Our age offers us abundant and glorious examples, my brother. Look at Ariston, look at Périande, Oronte, Alcidamus, Polydore, and Clitandre. No one will refuse them this title. They are no pretenders to virtue. You never see in them this unbearable ostentation, and their piety is human and tractable. They never censure the doings of others; they think there is too much pride in such censure; and leaving lofty words to others, they only reprove our actions by their own virtue. They do not trust to the appearance of evil, and are more inclined to judge kindly of others. We find no cabals, no intrigues among them; all their anxiety is to live a holy life. They never persecute the sinner, but they hate the sin. They do not care to display for the interest of Heaven a more ardent zeal than Heaven itself displays. These are people after my own heart; it is thus we should live; this is the pattern for us to follow. Tartuffe is not of this stamp, I know. You speak with the best intention of his goodness, but I fear you are dazzled by false appearances.

still in the habit of going to the public squares, to wait for some one to engage their services. We still say valet de place for a town-guide. The dévot de place would come forward in the same way, and make a show of his advantages or doings.

Org. Well, my dear brother, have you done?

Clé. Yes.

Org. [*Going.*] I am your servant.

Clé. Pray, one word more. Let us drop this discussion. You know that Valère has your promise to be your son-in-law?

Org. Yes.

Clé. And that you had fixed a day for the wedding?

Org. True.

Clé. Why then do you put off the ceremony?

Org. I don't know.

Clé. Have you any other project in your mind?

Org. Perhaps.

Clé. Would you break your word?

Org. I don't say that.

Clé. You have no reason, I think, to prevent you from fulfilling your promise?

Org. That depends.

Clé. Valère has asked me to speak to you on the subject.

Org. Heaven be praised for that!

Clé. But what answer shall I give him?

Org. Any answer you please.

Clé. Still, we ought to know your intentions. What are they?

Org. To do Heaven's will.

Clé. Let us speak reasonably. You gave your word to Valère; will you or will you not keep it?

Org. Good-bye. [*Exit.*

Clé. [*Alone.*] I greatly fear some misfortune for his love. I must go and tell him of all that is going on.

ACT II

SCENE I

ORGON, MARIANNE

ORGON. Marianne!

Mar. Father!

Org. Come here; I have something to say to you privately.

Mar. [*To* ORGON, *who peers into a little side-room.*] What are you looking for?

Org. I want to see if there is any one there who could overhear us: this is a most likely place for such a purpose. Now we are all right. Marianne, I have always found you of a sweet disposition, and you have always been very dear to me.

Mar. I thank you very much for this fatherly love.

Org. Rightly spoken, my daughter; and, to deserve it, you should think of nothing but of pleasing me.

Mar. I have no dearer wish at heart.

Org. Very well; then tell me, what do you say of our guest, Tartuffe?

Mar. Who, I?

Org. You. Be careful how you answer.

Mar. Alas! I will say anything you please of him.

SCENE II

ORGON, MARIANNE, DORINE [*coming in softly, and standing behind* ORGON *without being noticed by him*]

Org. You speak wisely. Then say, daughter, that he possesses the greatest merit; that he has touched your heart; and that it would be happiness to you to see him, with my approbation, become your husband.

Mar. [*Drawing back with surprise.*] Eh!

Org. What is the matter?

Mar. What did you say?

Org. What?

Mar. Did I make a mistake?

Org. Make a mistake?

Mar. Who is it, father, that you would have me say has touched my heart, and whom, with your approbation, it would be happiness to have for a husband?

Org. Tartuffe.

Mar. But I feel nothing of the kind, I assure you, father. Why would you have me tell such a falsehood?

Org. But I wish it to be the truth; and it is sufficient for you that I have decided it should be so.

Mar. What! you wish me, father——

Org. Yes, daughter, I intend to unite Tartuffe to my family by marrying him to you. I am resolved that he shall be your husband; and as I can—— [*Seeing* DORINE.] What are you doing here? Your curiosity must be very strong, young damsel, for you to come and listen to us after that fashion.

Dor. Really, sir, I don't know whether the report arose from conjecture or by chance; but I have just been told of this match, and I treated the whole story as a sorry joke.

Org. Why! Is the thing so incredible?

Dor. So incredible, sir, that I do not believe it, even when I hear you speak of it.

Org. I shall find the means of making you believe it, you may be sure.

Dor. Pooh! pooh! you are telling us a fine story indeed!

Org. I am telling you what will very soon prove true.

Dor. Nonsense!

Org. I assure you, daughter, that I am not jesting.

Dor. Ah! ah! Don't you go and believe your father, he is only laughing.

Org. I tell you——

Dor. It'll all be lost time; nobody will believe you.

Org. My anger at last——

Dor. Very well! very well! We believe you, and so much the worse for you. What! is it possible, sir, that with your wise looks, and that large beard in the very midst of your face, you should be foolish enough to wish——

Org. Now, listen. You have of late taken certain liberties here which do not please me at all. Do you hear?

Dor. Let us speak calmly, sir, I beseech you. Are you

laughing at us with this scheme? Your daughter will never do for a bigot; he has something else to think about. And then, what does such an alliance bring to you? Why should you, with all your wealth, go and choose a beggar for your son-in-law——

Org. Hold your tongue! If he has no money, remember that that is the very reason why we should esteem him. His poverty is a noble poverty, and one which ought to place him above all greatness, for he lost his fortune through the little care he had for the things of this world, and through his anxiety for the next. However, with my help, he will have the means of settling his affairs and of recovering his own. For, poor as he is, he is a gentleman, and the estate to which he has a right is considerable.

Dor. Yes; at least he says so. But this vanity, sir, does not agree well with piety. Whoever gives himself to the privations of a holy life should not make such a boast of title and lineage; the humble ways of piety suffer from the publicity of such ambition. Why such pride?——But what I say vexes you. Let us leave his nobility aside and speak of his person. Would you really, without sorrow, give a girl like your daughter to a man of his stamp? And ought you not to think a little of propriety, and prevent the consequences of such a union? You ought to know that you endanger a woman's virtue when you marry her against her will or taste. Her living virtuously in the bonds of matrimony depends much on the husband who is given to her; and those who are everywhere pointed at, have often made their wives what they are. It is, in fact, very difficult to remain faithful to husbands of a certain kind; and whoever gives his daughter to a man she hates is responsible to Heaven for all the sins she commits. Think to what danger you are exposed by such a scheme.

Org. I see that I shall have to learn from her what to do!

Dor. It would be all the better for you if you followed my advice.

Org. Daughter, let us no longer waste our time with such nonsense; I am your father, and I know what you want. I had promised you to Valère; but, from what I am told, not

only is he rather given to gambling, but I also suspect him of being a freethinker. I never see him come to church.

Dor. Would you have him run there at your fixed hours, like those who go there only to be seen?

Org. I don't ask your opinion in the matter.—In short, Tartuffe is on the best terms with Heaven, and this is a treasure to which nothing else can be compared. You will find all your wishes satisfied by such a union; it will prove a continual source of delight and pleasure. You will live together in your faithful love like two young children—like two turtle-doves. Never will any unhappy discussion arise between you, and you will make anything you like of him.

Dor. She will make naught but a fool of him, I know.

Org. Gracious me, what language!

Dor. I tell you that he has the look of one, and that his destiny will overrule, sir, all the virtue your daughter may have.

Org. Leave off interrupting me. Mind you keep silent, and not poke your word in, where you have no business.

Dor. [*She interrupts him each time he turns round to speak to his daughter.*] What I say is only for your own good, sir.

Org. You take too much upon you. Be quiet, if you please.

Dor. If I did not love you——

Org. I don't wish to be loved.

Dor. And I shall love you, in spite of yourself, sir.

Org. How now?

Dor. I have your honour at heart, and I can not bear to see you bring a thousand ill-natured remarks upon yourself.

Org. Will you be silent?

Dor. It is a shame to allow you to think of such a marriage.

Org. Will you hold your peace, you serpent, whose insolence——

Dor. What! you're a pious man, and you give way to anger?

Org. Yes; my patience must give way before all this. I insist upon you holding your tongue.

Dor. Very well; but, although I don't speak, I think none the less.

Org. Think, if you like; but be careful to tell me nothing

of your thoughts, or take care—— [*Turning to his daughter.*] Like a prudent man, I have carefully weighed everything.

Dor. [*Aside.*] It makes me furious not to be able to speak.

Org. Although he is no dandy, Tartuffe's face is such——

Dor. Yes, 'tis a fine phiz!

Org. That even if you had no sympathy whatever with all his other gifts ——

Dor. Yes, she is well provided for! [ORGON *turns round to face* DORINE, *and with crossed arms listens to her.*] If I were in her place, depend upon it no man should marry me against my will without paying for it. I would soon show him, after our wedding-day, that a woman can always revenge herself.

Org. So, you will pay no heed to what I say?

Dor. What do you complain of? I am not speaking to you.

Org. What is it you are doing, then?

Dor. I am speaking to myself; that's all.

Org. [*Aside.*] To punish her insolence, I shall have to make her feel the weight of my hand. [*He gets ready to give a box on the ear to* DORINE, *and at each word he says to his daughter he turns round to look at* DORINE, *who stands bolt upright, without speaking.*] Daughter, you can not but approve the determination I have come to——and believe that the husband——I have chosen for you—— [*To* DORINE.] Why don't you speak to yourself?

Dor. I have nothing to say to myself.

Org. Only try one little word more.

Dor. I don't choose to.

Org. I was waiting for you.

Dor. No such fool, I!

Org. In short, daughter, you must obey, and show for my choice that deference——

Dor. [*Running away.*] I'd take good care not to marry such a man.

Org. [*Who has missed giving a box on the ear to* DORINE.] You have there with you, daughter, a pestilent hussy, with whom I can live no longer without sin. I feel unable to go on now. Her insolent remarks have put me in such a passion that I must go out awhile to recover myself. [*Exit.*

SCENE III

MARIANNE, DORINE

Dor. Tell me, have you lost all power of speech? and must I act for you in this? What! you allow a mad proposal to be made to you without saying a single word against it!

Mar. What will you have me do against the absolute will of my father?

Dor. Anything to turn off such a threatened danger.

Mar. But what?

Dor. Why, tell him that no one loves at the bidding of another; that you marry for yourself, and not for him; that, as this business concerns you only, it is you, not him, that the husband should please; and that, since his Tartuffe seems so charming in his eyes, he may marry him himself as much as he likes.

Mar. A father has such authority over us that I acknowledge I had not the courage to answer him.

Dor. But, let us see. Valère has proposed to you; now, tell me, do you love him or do you not?

Mar. Ah! how unjust you are toward my love, Dorine! Why should you ask me such a thing? Have I not opened my heart to you? Do you not know how greatly I love him?

Dor. How am I to know whether you spoke from your heart, and whether it is perfectly true that you love him?

Mar. You do me a great wrong to doubt it, Dorine; and you know very well my true feelings in the matter.

Dor. So that you really love him?

Mar. Yes, passionately.

Dor. And, if we are to believe appearances, he loves you as well?

Mar. Yes; I believe he does.

Dor. So that you are both anxious to be married?

Mar. Certainly.

Dor. What do you mean to do, then, about this other marriage?

Mar. To die by my own hands, if I am forced to comply with it.

Dor. Very good; that's a resource that had not entered

my head. You have only to die in order to get out of trouble. The remedy is really excellent! Pooh! it puts me out of all patience to hear this kind of talk.

Mar. Alas! how angry you seem, Dorine! You have no pity for the sorrows of others.

Dor. I have no pity for those who talk nonsense, and who, in the time of trial, are as soft as you are.

Mar. But how can I help, if timidity——

Dor. But love requires firmness.

Mar. Have I wavered in my love for Valère? and is it not for him to obtain me from my father?

Dor. Yet, if your father is a downright churl who is gone crazy with his Tartuffe, and does not keep his promise about your marriage, is your lover to be blamed for that?

Mar. Yet you would not have me, by a haughty and contemptuous refusal, let every one into the secret of my love? Whatever may be Valère's qualities, am I to forget for him the modesty of my sex, and my duty as a daughter? Would you have the state of my feelings exposed to the eyes of the world——

Dor. No, no; I don't want anything. I see that you wish to have Mr. Tartuffe; and, now I think of it, I should be wrong to dissuade you from such a marriage. What reasons can I have to oppose your wishes? The match, in itself, is most advantageous. Mr. Tartuffe! oh! oh! that is not a proposal to be despised. Indeed, to say the truth, Tartuffe is no fool; and it is no small honour to be his better-half. Everybody attributes glory to him already. He is a nobleman in his village; and, withal, a well-built fellow, with red ears and florid cheeks. You will live only too happily with such a husband.

Mar. Alas!

Dor. What delight will be yours when you are the wife of such a handsome spouse!

Mar. Ah! leave off speaking in such a way, I beg of you, and help me to find some means of avoiding this marriage. I give up timidity, I hesitate no longer, and I am ready to do anything.

Dor. No, no; a daughter should obey her father, were he to ask her to marry an ape! After all, your fate is splendid!

What do you complain of? You will go in a van to his village, which is fertile in cousins of both sexes, and it will be your joy to entertain them. You will at once be introduced, by way of footing, into the best society, and will go and visit the bailiff's wife and the assessor's lady, who will honour you with a folding chair. There, during the carnival, you may hope for a ball with the great band: to wit, two bagpipes, and sometimes Fagotin[1] and the marionettes; only, if your husband——

Mar. Ah! you kill me! Try rather to assist me, Dorine. Give me your advice.

Dor. I am your servant.

Mar. Ah! I beseech you, Dorine!

Dor. No, for your punishment you deserve that the thing should take place.

Mar. Dear Dorine, do!

Dor. No.

Mar. If I must tell openly the feelings of my——

Dor. Oh, dear, no; Tartuffe is the man for you, and you shall have a taste of him.

Mar. You know that I have always trusted you; grant me——

Dor. No, you shall be, ah! yes, you shall be tartufied.

Mar. Very well, since my fate draws no pity from you, leave me wholly to my despair; from it my heart will gather fresh strength, and I know an infallible remedy for my sufferings.

[*Is going.*

Dor. Here! here! come back! I'll be angry no longer. I must have pity on you, in spite of everything.

Mar. I assure you, Dorine, that if I am forced to endure such misery, I have no resource left but to die.

Dor. Don't despair. We may, with some skill, prevent—— But here is Valère, your lover.

[1] A clever monkey, very well known in Paris in Molière's time.

SCENE IV

VALÈRE, MARIANNE, DORINE

Valère. There is a report about, madam, of which I had no idea, and which is really excellent.

Mar. What is it?

Val. That you are going to be married to Tartuffe.

Mar. It is quite true that my father has taken this idea into his head.

Val. Your father——

Mar. Has changed his mind. He has just now proposed the thing to me.

Val. What! seriously?

Mar. Yes, seriously. He openly declared himself for the match.

Val. And what resolution have you taken?

Mar. I hardly know.

Val. The answer is candid—you hardly know?

Mar. No.

Val. No?

Mar. What do you advise me?

Val. I? I advise you to take him for a husband.

Mar. You advise me to take him?

Val. Yes.

Mar. Sincerely?

Val. Of course. The choice is splendid, and is worth considering.

Mar. Very well, sir, I will follow the advice you give me.

Val. I see that it will not be any great trouble to you to follow it.

Mar. No more trouble than it was for you to give it.

Val. I gave it in order to afford you pleasure, madam.

Mar. And I will follow it in order to afford you pleasure, sir.

Dor. [*Drawing back to the farthest part of the stage.*] Now, let us see what'll come out of all this.

Val. It is thus you love me! and it was all deceit when you——

Mar. This is nothing to the purpose. You tell me plainly

that I ought to accept for a husband the man who is proposed to me, and I simply say that I will do so, since I receive such advice from you.

Val. Do not make what I said an excuse. You had already taken a decision, and you simply make use of a frivolous pretext to break off your engagement to me.

Mar. Yes, it is exactly so.

Val. I have not the least doubt about it; and never has your heart had the least affection for me.

Mar. Alas! you may think as you please.

Val. Yes, yes, I can think as I please; but my offended heart will perhaps be beforehand with you in such a design; and I know who will accept my love and my hand.

Mar. I have no doubt of it; and the love claimed by merit——

Val. Ah! madam, let us leave merit aside. I possess very little, and your behaviour toward me is a proof of it; yet I trust in the indulgence that another may have for me, and she, knowing that I am free, will consent, without shame, to make up for my loss.

Mar. Your loss is not much; and you will soon be comforted in the exchange.

Val. You may trust me for that; I shall do my best. Our honour demands that we should forget a heart that forgets us; but if, when we do our utmost, we do not succeed, we must hide our failure; for to love where we are loved no longer is but a weakness of which we ought to be ashamed.

Mar. These feelings are noble and worthy of praise.

Val. No doubt; and they have a right to be approved. What! would you have me forever keep in my heart the ardent love I feel for you? Would you have me see you belong to another without bestowing the heart you refuse elsewhere?

Mar. On the contrary, it is the very thing I hope for; and I should like to see the thing already done.

Val. You would like to see it?

Mar. Certainly.

Val. You have insulted me too long, madam, and I shall, to satisfy you, go this very moment. [*About to go.*

Mar. Do so.

Val. [*Coming back.*] At least, remember that it is you who drive me to this extremity. [*Going.*

Mar. Very well.

Val. [*Coming back again.*] And that this decision is entirely due to your example.

Mar. To my example; let it be so.

Val. [*Going.*] Enough! you shall be obeyed at once.

Mar. So much the better.

Val. [*Coming back again.*] You see me here for the last time.

Mar. That's well.

Val. [*Goes, and when near the door turns round.*] What is it you say?

Mar. What is the matter?

Val. Did you not call me?

Mar. No, you are dreaming.

Val. Very well, I go then. Farewell, madam.

[*Goes away slowly.*

Dor. [*To* MARIANNE.] I really believe you are crazy, with all this nonsense. I have left you to quarrel as much as you pleased, so as to see how far you would go.—I say, Mr. Valère!

[*She stops* VALÈRE *by the arm.*

Val. [*Affecting to resist.*] Well, what do you want, Dorine?

Dor. Come here.

Val. No, no, I feel too indignant. Do not stop me, since she wishes it.

Dor. Stop.

Val. No, my mind is quite made up.

Dor. Ah!

Mar. [*Aside.*] He hates the sight of me; my presence drives him away, and I shall do well to free him from it. [*Is going.*

Dor. [*Letting go of* VALÈRE *and running after* MARIANNE.] The other, now! Where are you going?

Mar. Leave me.

Dor. You must come back.

Mar. No, no, Dorine, it is in vain for you to keep me.

Val. [*Aside.*] I see plainly that my presence is hateful to her, and it is better that I should free her from it.

Dor. [*Letting go of* MARIANNE *to run after* VALÈRE.] Again! Plague you both!—Come, I will have it so. Cease all this fooling, and come here, both of you. [*She holds them both.*

Val. [*To* DORINE.] But what is it you want?

Mar. [*To* DORINE.] But what do you mean?

Dor. To set you all right again, and to help you out of your troubles. [*To* VALÈRE.] Are you mad, to have such a quarrel?

Val. Did you not hear how she spoke to me?

Dor. [*To* MARIANNE.] Have you lost your senses, you, to get into such a passion?

Mar. Did you not see how it all happened, and how he treated me?

Dor. You are a silly couple. [*To* VALÈRE.] She has no greater anxiety than to keep faithful to you. [*To* MARIANNE.] You are the only one he loves, and he asks for nothing else than to marry you; I'll answer for it, upon my life.

Mar. [*To* VALÈRE.] Why, then, give me such advice?

Val. [*To* MARIANNE]. Why, also, ask me for it on such a matter?

Dor. You are absurd, both of you. [*To* VALÈRE.] Come, your hand. [*To* MARIANNE.] Now, yours.

Val. [*Giving his hand to* DORINE.] Why my hand?

Mar. [*Also giving her hand.*] What is the use of all this?

Dor. Come, come quickly, come on; you love each other more than you think.

[VALÈRE *and* MARIANNE *hold each other's hand for a while without looking at each other.*

Val. [*Turning to* MARIANNE.] Don't do things too much against your will, and give a man a civil look.

[MARIANNE *turns round to* VALÈRE *and smiles.*

Dor. Now, really, lovers are very foolish.

Val. [*To* MARIANNE.] Have I not a right to complain of you? And, to say the least, are you not very unkind to take pleasure in saying such a cruel thing to me?

Mar. But are you not also the most ungrateful lover——

Dor. Let us leave all that aside for another time, and think of what we can do to ward off this tiresome marriage.

Mar. Tell us what means we must make use of?

Dor. We'll try everything. [*To* MARIANNE.] Your father

is absurd, [*to* VALÈRE] and it is ridiculous. [*To* MARIANNE.] But you, the best you can do is to seem to acquiesce willingly in his wish; for, in case of alarm, it would be easier for you to put off this marriage. When we gain time we can find remedies for anything. Sometimes you will complain of sudden illness; that will necessitate a delay; at another you will bring forward some evil omens—either that you have met a dead body, have broken a looking-glass, or have dreamed of muddy water. But the best resource of all is that they can not possibly make you his wife unless you say "Yes." However, if we mean our plans to be successful, the best thing for the present is, I think, for us not to be found talking together. [*To* VALÈRE.] Go away at once; make use of your friends to force her father to keep the promise he made to you. We will, on our side, ask his brother to act with us, and gain the mother-in-law to our side. Good-bye.

Val. [*To* MARIANNE.] Whatever we may all do, my greatest hope is really in you.

Mar. [*To* VALÈRE.] I can not answer for the will of my father, but I will never belong to any one but Valère.

Val. Ah! how happy you make me! And, whatever they dare——

Dor. Ah me! lovers are never tired of talking! You must be off, I tell you.

Val. [*Goes and comes back.*] In short——

Dor. What length of tongue! You go, sir, that way; and you, miss, this.

[DORINE *pushes them both away and forces them to separate.*

ACT III

SCENE I

DAMIS, DORINE

DAMIS. May Heaven this moment crush me; may everybody take me forever for the greatest fool alive, if there is any respect or any power able to stop me, and if I do not——

Dor. Pray moderate your anger; your father only just mentioned the matter; we do not always do what we propose, and it's a long way from the project to the execution.

Da. I will put a stop to the intrigues of that scoundrel, and will tell him in his ear a word or two which——

Dor. Gently, gently; allow your stepmother to act first upon him and your father. She has a certain power over Tartuffe. He is very amiable toward her, and may have a certain tenderness of heart for her. Would to Heaven it were possible! It would be a fine thing! In short, she has sent for him on your account; she wants to sound him about this marriage, which makes you so furious, to know what he thinks, and to make him understand what unpleasantness it would cause in the family, if he encourages it at all. His servant says that he is at his prayers, so that I have not been able to see him; but he added that he will soon come down. Go, then, I beg of you, and leave me to wait for him.

Da. But I can be present at this interview.

Dor. No, no; better leave them alone.

Da. I should say nothing to him.

Dor. You think so; but we know what a state of anger you are put in at times; it is the surest way to spoil everything. You must go.

Da. No, I will listen without getting into a rage.

Dor. How tiresome you are! There, he is coming. Go away.

[DAMIS *hides himself in the small room at the side of the stage.*

SCENE II

TARTUFFE, DORINE

Tartuffe. [*As soon as he sees* DORINE *speaks to his servant, who is within.*] Laurent, lock up my hair-shirt and my scourge, and pray Heaven ever to enlighten you with grace! If anybody comes to see me, say that I am gone to the prisons to distribute my alms.

Dor. [*Aside.*] What boasting and affectation!

Tar. What is it you want?

Dor. To tell you——

Tar. [*Taking a handkerchief out of his pocket.*] Ah! Heaven! before you speak to me, take this handkerchief, pray.

Dor. What's the matter?

Tar. Cover this bosom, of which I can not bear the sight. Such objects hurt the soul, and are conducive to sinful thoughts.

Dor. You are very susceptible to temptation, it seems, and the flesh makes great impression on you. I don't know why you should burn so quickly; but, as for me, I am not so easily moved, and were I to see your hide from tip to toe, I know pretty well that I should in no way be tempted.

Tar. Put more modesty into your speech, or I will leave you at once.

Dor. You need not, for I shall soon leave you in peace, and all I have to say is, that my lady is coming in this room, and would be glad to have a moment's talk with you.

Tar. Alas! With all my heart.

Dor. [*Aside.*] How sweet we are! In good troth, I still abide by what I said.

Tar. Will she soon be here?

Dor. Directly. I hear her, I believe; yes, here she is. I leave you together. [*Exit.*

SCENE III

ELMIRE, TARTUFFE

Tar. May Heaven, in its great goodness, ever bestow on you health of body and of mind, and shower blessings on your days, according to the prayer of the lowest of its servants!

El. I am much obliged to you for this pious wish; but let us sit down a moment to talk more comfortably.

Tar. [*Seated.*] Have you quite recovered from your indisposition?

El. [*Seated.*] Quite. That feverishness soon left me.

Tar. My prayers have not merit sufficient to have obtained this favour from Heaven; but I have not offered up one petition in which you were not concerned.

El. Your anxious zeal is really too great.

Tar. We can not have too great anxiety for your dear health; and to give you back the full enjoyment of it, I would have sacrificed my own.

El. You carry Christian charity very far, and I am under much obligation to you for all this kindness.

Tar. I do only what you deserve.

El. I wished to speak to you in private on a certain matter, and I am glad that nobody is here to hear us.

Tar. And I also am delighted. It is very sweet for me, madam, to find myself alone with you——I have often prayed Heaven to bestow this favour upon me; but till now it has been in vain.

El. For my part, all I want is, that you should speak frankly, and hide nothing from me.

[DAMIS, *without being seen, half opens the door of the room to hear the conversation.*

Tar. And my wish is also that you will allow me the cherished favour of speaking openly to you, and of giving you my word of honour, that if I have said anything against the visits which are paid here to your charms, it has never been done out of hatred to you; but rather out of an ardent zeal which carries me away, and from a sincere feeling of——

El. I quite understand it to be so, and I feel sure that it all proceeds from your anxiety for my good.

Tar. [*Taking her hands and pressing them.*] It is really so, madam, and my fervour is such——

El. Ah! you press my hand too much.

Tar. It is through an excess of zeal. I never intended to hurt you, I had much rather——

[*He puts his hand on* ELMIRE'S *knees.*

El. Why do you put your hand there?

Tar. I was feeling your dress; the stuff is very soft.

El. I beg of you to leave off, I am very ticklish.

[ELMIRE *draws back her chair, and* TARTUFFE *follows her with his.*

Tar. [*Handling* ELMIRE'S *collar.*] Heaven! how marvellous this point lace is! The work done in our days is perfectly wonderful, and never has such perfection been attained in everything.

El. It is true. But let us speak of what brings me here. I have been told that my husband intends to break his word, and to give you his daughter in marriage. Is that true? Pray tell me?

Tar. He has merely alluded to it. But, madam, to tell you the truth, that is not the happiness for which my soul sighs; I find elsewhere the unspeakable attractions of the bliss which is the end of all my hopes.

El. That is because you care not for earthly things.

Tar. My breast, madam, does not inclose a heart of flint.

El. I know, for my part, that all your sighs tend toward Heaven, and that you have no desire for anything here below.

Tar. Our love for the beauty which is eternal stifles not in us love for that which is fleeting and temporal; and we can easily be charmed with the perfect works Heaven has created. Its reflected attractions shine forth in such as you; but it is in you alone that its choicest wonders are centred. It has lavished upon you charms which dazzle the eye, and which touch the heart; and I have never gazed on you, perfect creature, without admiring the Creator of the universe, and without feeling my heart seized with an ardent love for the most beautiful picture in which He has reproduced Himself. At first I feared that this secret tenderness might be a skilful assault of the Evil One; I even thought I would avoid your presence, fearing you might prove a stumbling-block to my salvation. But I have learned, O adorable beauty, that my passion need not be a guilty one; that I can reconcile it with modesty; and I have given up my whole soul to it. I know that I am very presumptuous in making you the offer of such a heart as mine; but in my love I hope everything from you, nothing from the vain

efforts of my unworthy self. In you is my hope, my happiness, my peace; on you depends my misery or bliss; and by your verdict I shall be forever happy, if you wish it; unhappy if it pleases you.

El. Quite a gallant declaration. But you must acknowledge that it is rather surprising. It seems to me that you might have fortified your heart a little more carefully against temptation, and have paused before such a design. A devotee like you, who is everywhere spoken of as——

Tar. Ah! Although a devotee, I am no less a man. When your celestial attractions burst upon the sight, the heart surrenders, and reasons no more. I know that such language from me seems somewhat strange; but after all, madam, I am not an angel; and, if you condemn the confession I make, you have only your own attractions to blame for it. As soon as I beheld their more than human beauty, my whole being was surrendered to you. The unspeakable sweetness of your divine charms forced the obstinate resistance of my heart; it overcame everything—fasting, prayers, and tears—and fixed all my hopes in you. A thousand times my eyes and my sighs have told you this; to-day I explain myself with words. Ah! if you consider with some kindness the tribulations and trials of your unworthy slave, if your goodness has compassion on me, and deigns to stoop so low as my nothingness, I shall ever have for you, O marvellous beauty, a devotion never to be equalled. With me your reputation runs no risk, and has no disgrace to fear. All those court gallants upon whom women dote, are noisy in their doings, boastful in their talk. Ever vain of their success, they never receive favours without divulging them; and their indiscreet tongues dishonour the altar on which their hearts sacrifice. But men like me burn with a hidden flame, and secrecy is forever assured. The care which we take of our own reputation is a warrant to the woman who accepts our heart, that she will find love without scandal, and pleasure without fear.

El. I have listened to you, and your rhetoric expresses itself in terms strong enough. Are you not afraid that I might be disposed to tell my husband of this passionate declaration, and that its sudden disclosure might influence the friendship which he has toward you?

Tar. I know that your tender-heartedness is too great, and that you will excuse, because of human frailty, the violent transports of a love which offends you, and will consider, when you look at yourself, that people are not blind, and that flesh is weak.

El. Others might take all this differently; but I will endeavour to show my discretion. I will tell nothing to my husband of what has taken place; but, in return, I must require one thing of you, which is to forward honestly and sincerely the marriage which has been decided between Valère and Marianne, and renounce the unjust power which would enrich you with what belongs to another——

SCENE IV

Elmire, Damis, Tartuffe

Da. [*Coming out of the side-room where he was hidden.*] No, madam, no; all this must be made public. I was in that place and overheard everything. Heaven in its goodness seems to have directed my steps hither, to confound the pride of a wretch who wrongs me, and to guide me to a sure revenge for his hypocrisy and insolence. I will undeceive my father, and will show him in a clear, strong light the heart of the miscreant who dares to speak to you of love.

El. No, Damis, it is sufficient if he promises to amend, and endeavours to deserve the forgiveness I have spoken of. Since I have promised it, let me abide by my word. I have no wish for scandal. A woman should despise these follies, and never trouble her husband's ears with them.

Da. You have your reasons for dealing thus with him, and I have mine for acting otherwise. It is a mockery to try to spare him. In the insolent pride of his canting bigotry he has already triumphed too much over my just wrath, and has caused too many troubles in our house. The impostor has governed my father but too long, and too long opposed my love and Valère's. It is right that my father's eyes should be opened to the perfidy of this villain. Heaven offers me an easy opportunity, and I am thankful for it. Were I not to seize it, I should deserve never to have another.

El. Damis——

Da. No, I will, with your permission, follow my own counsel. My heart is overjoyed; and it is in vain for you to try to dissuade me from tasting the pleasure of revenge. I will at once make a full disclosure of all this. But here is the very person to give me satisfaction.

SCENE V

Orgon, Elmire, Damis, Tartuffe

Da. Come, father, we will treat your arrival with a piece of news that will somewhat surprise you. You are well rewarded for all your caresses, and this gentleman well repays your tenderness. His great zeal for you has just shown itself, and stops at nothing short of dishonouring you. I have overheard him here, making to your wife an insulting declaration of a guilty love. She, amiable and gentle, and in her too great discretion, insisted upon keeping the matter a secret from you; but I can not encourage such shamelessness, and I think it would be an offence to you were I to be silent about it.

El. Yes, in my opinion, it is better not to trouble the peace of a husband by repeating to him such senseless words. Honour does not depend on our speaking of it; it is sufficient that we can defend ourselves. I have always had the same feelings on the subject; and you would have said nothing, Damis, if I had had any influence over you.

SCENE VI

Orgon, Damis, Tartuffe

Org. What do I hear! O Heaven! Is it possible!

Tar. Yes, brother, I am a wicked, guilty, miserable sinner, full of iniquity, the greatest wretch that earth ever bore. Each moment of my life is overburdened with pollution; it is but a long continuation of crimes and defilement, and I see that Heaven, to punish me for my sins, intends to mortify me on this occasion. However great may be the crime laid to my charge, I have neither the wish nor the pride to deny it. Believe what is said to you, arm all your wrath, and drive me like

a criminal from your house. Whatever shame is heaped upon me, I deserve even greater.

Org. [*To his son.*] Ah! miscreant! how dare you try to sully the spotless purity of his virtue with this falsehood?

Da. What! the feigned meekness of this hypocrite will make you give the lie to——

Org. Hold your tongue, you cursed plague!

Tar. Ah! let him speak; you blame him wrongfully, and you would do better to believe what he tells you. Why should you be so favourable to me in this instance? Do you know, after all, what I am capable of doing? Do you, brother, trust to the outward man; and do you think me good, because of what you see? No, no, you are deceived by appearances, and I am, alas! no better than they think. Everybody takes me for a good man, no doubt; but the truth is, that I am worthless. [*To* DAMIS.] Yes, dear child, speak; call me perfidious, infamous, reprobate, thief, and murderer; load me with still more hateful names; I do not gainsay them, I have deserved them all; and on my knees I will suffer the ignominy due to the crimes of my shameful life. [*Kneels.*

Org. [*To* TARTUFFE.] Ah! brother, this is too much. [*To his son.*] Does not your heart relent, traitor?

Da. What! Can his words so far deceive you as——

Org. Hold your tongue, rascal! [*Raising* TARTUFFE.] Brother, pray rise. [*To his son.*] Wretch!

Da. He can——

Org. Hold your tongue!

Da. I am furious. What! I am taken for——

Org. If you say one word more, I'll break every bone——

Tar. In Heaven's name, my brother, do not forget yourself! I had rather suffer the greatest injury than that he should receive the most trifling hurt on my account.

Org. [*To his son.*] Ungrateful wretch!

Tar. Leave him in peace. If I must on my knees ask forgiveness for him——

[*He falls on his knees,* ORGON *does the same, and embraces* TARTUFFE.

Org. Alas! my brother, what are you doing? [*To his son.*] See his goodness, rascal!

Da. So——

Org. Peace.

Da. What! I——

Org. Peace, I say. I know the motive which makes you accuse him. You all hate him, and I now see wife, children, and servants embittered against him. You have recourse to everything to drive this pious person from my home. But the more you strive to send him away, the more I will do to keep him. I will therefore, to crush the pride of the whole family, hasten his marriage with my daughter.

Da. You mean to force her to accept him?

Org. Yes, traitor; and to confound you all, it shall be done this very evening. Ah! I defy the whole household; I will show you that you have to obey me, and that I am the master here. Now, quick, retract your words and this very moment throw yourself at his feet to ask his forgiveness.

Da. Who? I? Ask forgiveness of the villain who by his impostures——

Org. What, scoundrel, you refuse, and abuse him besides? A cudgel! give me a cudgel! [*To* TARTUFFE.] Don't prevent me. [*To his son.*] Get out of my house this moment, and be careful you are never bold enough to set foot in it again.

Da. Yes, I shall go, but——

Org. Quick then, decamp; I disinherit you, you scoundrel, and give you my curse besides.

SCENE VII

ORGON, TARTUFFE

Org. To offend a holy man in that way!

Tar. O Heaven! forgive me as I forgive him. [*To* ORGON.] If you could know the pain it gives me to see them try to blacken my character to you, dear brother——

Org. Alas!

Tar. The very thought of this ingratitude is a torture too great for me to bear——the horror that I feel——My heart is so full that I can not speak——It will kill me.

Org. [*In tears, running to the door where he drove his son out.*] Wretch! how I grieve to have spared you and not to have made

an end of you on the spot! [*To* TARTUFFE.] Compose yourself, brother, do not give way to grief.

Tar. No, let us put an end to all these painful disputes. I see what great troubles I occasion here, and I think, brother, that my duty is to leave your house.

Org. How! surely you are not in earnest?

Tar. They hate me, and I see that they will try to make you doubt my good faith toward you.

Org. What does it matter? Do you see me listen to them?

Tar. I have no doubt but that they will persevere in their attacks; and these very reports which you refuse to believe to-day may another time be credited by you.

Org. No, brother, never.

Tar. Ah! brother, a wife can easily influence the mind of her husband.

Org. No, no.

Tar. Let me go away, and thus remove from them all occasion of attacking me.

Org. No, you will stop here; my life depends upon it.

Tar. Well, if it is so, I must do violence to myself. Ah, if you only would——

Org. No!

Tar. I yield. Let us say no more about it. But I know how I must behave in future. Honour is a delicate matter and friendship requires me to prevent reports and causes for suspicion. I will avoid your wife, and you shall never see me——

Org. No, you will see and speak to her in spite of everybody. I delight in vexing people; and I wish you to be seen in her company at all hours of the day. This is not all. The better to brave them, I will have no other heir but you, and I will go at once and draw up a deed of gift, by which you will inherit all my possessions. A true, faithful friend whom I take for son-in-law is more precious to me than son, wife, or relations. Will you not accept what I propose?

Tar. May Heaven's will be done in all things!

Org. Poor man! Let us go forthwith to draw up the deed, and then let envy burst with rage.

ACT IV

SCENE I

CLÉANTE, TARTUFFE

CLÉANTE. Yes, it is in everybody's mouth, and I am only telling you the truth. The rumours to which this news gives rise, reflect little credit upon you, and I am glad I have met with you, sir, so that I might tell you plainly my mind on the subject. I do not inquire into the reports that are spread about; I pass them by and admit the worst view of the case. I will suppose that Damis has not acted well, and that you have been wrongly accused. Yet is it not the part of a good Christian to forgive all injuries and to banish from his heart every desire of revenge? Should you allow a son to be driven away from his father's house, because you have fallen out with him? I repeat it—I only speak the simple truth when I tell you that great and small are scandalized by it. Believe me, you had better bring peace back to this house, and not push matters to extremes. Make a sacrifice to God of your resentment, and restore the son to his father's favour.

Tar. Alas! sir, I have no dearer wish at heart; I bear him no ill-will; I forgive him everything. I've nothing to blame him for, and would serve him to the best of my power. But the interests of Heaven are against it, and if he comes I must leave; after his inconceivable behaviour I can hold no intercourse with him without scandal. Imagine what the world would say! they would impute it to sheer policy on my part, and would say everywhere that, knowing myself to be guilty, I affect a charitable zeal for my accuser; that I fear him and wish to conciliate him so that by underhand dealings I may engage him to silence.

Clé. These are but sham excuses, sir, and your reasons are too far-fetched. Why should you take the interests of Heaven upon yourself? Can not Heaven punish the guilty without our help? Leave vengeance to God, remember the forgiveness which he claims from us. Care not to be judged of men when you do his sovereign will. What! the paltry fear of what the

world may say can prevent the accomplishment of a good and noble action? No, no; let us ever do what Heaven has commanded, and not trouble ourselves with any other care.

Tar. I have already told you, sir, that I forgive him, and in that I do what Heaven has commanded; but, after the scandal and insult of to-day, Heaven does not require that I should live with him.

Clé. And does it ask from you, sir, to give a ready ear to what a mere caprice dictates to the father, and to accept an inheritance to which you have no right?

Tar. Those who know me will not think that I act from mercenary motives. The riches of this world have no attraction for me; I am not dazzled by their deceptive glitter. If I bring myself to accept the gift of this property from the father, it is merely that I am afraid of its falling into wicked hands, and of its being shared by those who would make a criminal use of it in the world and would not employ it, as I propose to do, for the glory of Heaven and the well-being of my fellow-men.

Clé. Ah! sir, banish these delicate scruples from your mind, for they may give cause for the rightful heir to complain. Suffer him, without giving yourself any such anxiety, to enjoy his rights at his own peril; and consider that it is better for him to make a bad use of it than that you should be accused of defrauding him of it. I only wonder that you could have heard such a proposal without confusion. For, in truth, do we find among the maxims of true piety any which enjoins the stripping a lawful heir of his inheritance? And if Heaven has put any invincible obstacle against your living with Damis, would it not be more honourable for you to retire like a discreet person, than to suffer an only son to be turned out of doors for you? Believe me, sir, it would be giving your probity——

Tar. Sir, it is half past three: certain devotions call me upstairs; pray excuse me for leaving you so soon. [*Exit.*

Clé. Ah!

SCENE II

Elmire, Marianne, Cléante, Dorine

Dor. [*To* Cléante.] For pity's sake join us in all we do for her, sir! She is in a terrible state of dread, and the marriage contract which her father has got ready for to-night drives her to despair.—Here he comes. Let us all unite our efforts, I beg of you, and try either by force or cunning to bring to naught the wretched design which has thrown us all into consternation.

SCENE III

Orgon, Elmire, Marianne, Cléante, Dorine

Org. Ah! I am delighted to find you all here. [*To* Marianne.] In this contract I bring wherewith to please you. You know, do you not, what I mean?

Mar. [*At* Orgon's *feet.*] Father! in the name of Heaven, which is a witness of my grief; in the name of all that can move your heart, forego the rights my birth gives you, and do not exact this obedience from me. Do not by such a harsh law compel me to complain to Heaven of my duty to you, and do not, alas! render most miserable the life I owe you. If, contrary to the sweet hopes which I had cherished, you now forbid me to belong to the man I love, I beseech you on my knees at least to save me from the wretchedness of belonging to him I abhor. Do not drive me to despair by making use of all your power over me.

Org. [*Moved and aside.*] Stand firm, my heart! No human weakness!

Mar. I do not feel aggrieved for your tenderness for him; you can act as your heart prompts you—give him all you possess, and join to it what is mine. I consent, and give it up to him with all my heart. But do not dispose in the same way of my person; suffer me to wear out the rest of my wretched life in the austere discipline of a convent.

Org. Ah, yes, you are, I see, one of those would-be nuns, because your father crosses your forbidden love. Stand up! The more your heart recoils from the match, the better it will

be for your salvation. Mortify your senses by this marriage, and trouble me no longer on the subject.

Dor. But what——

Org. Hold your tongue; speak to people of your own set. I forbid you once and for all to say a word.

Clé. If you will allow me to speak and advise——

Org. Brother, your advice is of the best possible kind; it is full of truth and good sense, and I value it highly. You will, however, allow me not to avail myself of it.

El. [*To her husband.*] I hardly know what to say in the face of all this, and I really admire you in your blindness. You must be bewitched with the man and altogether prepossessed in his favour for you to deny the truth of what we tell you took place to-day!

Org. I am your humble servant, but I judge by appearances. I know how lenient you are toward my rascal of a son, and see that you were afraid of disowning the trick he would have played on the poor fellow. In short, you took the matter too easily for me to believe you; you would have been more moved had the thing been true.

El. Is it necessary for our honour to take up arms so furiously at a simple declaration of love? Is it not possible to give a fitting answer without anger in our eyes and invectives in our mouth? For my part, I listen with mere indifference to such talk, and I care not to make any ado about it. I prefer to show that virtue can be accomplished by gentleness, and I have no respect for those savage prudes who defend their honour with tooth and nail, and who at the slightest word are ready to tear a man's eyes out. Heaven preserve me from such discretion! I prefer a virtue with nothing of the tigress about it, for I believe that a quiet and cold rebuff is quite as efficient.

Org. In short, I know all about this business, and no words of yours can alter my conviction.

El. I wonder more and more at your strange weakness. But what answer would your credulity give, if I made you see that we have told you the truth?

Org. See?

El. Yes.

Org. Rubbish!

El. But, still, suppose I find a way of showing it to you, so that you can not mistake it?

Org. Moonshine!

El. What a strange man you are! Yet at least answer me. I do not ask you to believe us; but suppose we could find a place where you can see and hear all about what we have told you, what would you say then of your pious man?

Org. In that case I should say that——I should say nothing; for, in short, it is impossible.

El. Your error lasts too long, and you have taxed me too long with falsehood. You must, to satisfy me, without delay be a witness of what I have said.

Org. Be it so; I take you at your word. We will see how far you can make your promise good.

El. [*To* DORINE.] Get him to come in here.

Dor. [*To* ELMIRE.] He is very crafty, and, may be, it will be a difficult matter to catch him.

El. [*To* DORINE.] No, we are easily duped by those we love, and we deceive ourselves through our own conceit. Tell him to come [*to* CLÉANTE *and* MARIANNE], and you withdraw.

SCENE IV

ELMIRE, ORGON

El. Now bring the table here, and get under it.

Org. Get under it?

El. It is important that you should be well concealed.

Org. But why under the table?

El. Ah! never mind; do what I tell you. I have my plan quite ready in my head, and you shall judge. Place yourself where I tell you, and then be careful that you are neither seen nor heard.

Org. I must say that my condescension is very great. However, I will see you through your scheme.

El. You will have nothing to answer me. [*To her husband, who is under the table.*] Mind! I'm going to speak on a strange subject, and you must not be shocked. I have a right to say whatever I choose, since it is to convince you, as I have prom-

ised to do. I will, by coaxing speeches, make the hypocrite drop his mask, will flatter the insolent desires of his love, and leave free room to his audacity. As it is only because of you, and the better to confound him, that I shall affect to return his love, I will cease as soon as you feel convinced, and things need go no further than you please. It is for you to spare your wife, to stop his mad purpose when you think matters have been carried far enough, and to suffer me to be exposed to his insolence only so far as is necessary to disabuse you. This is your concern; you can act when you like, and——He is coming——Do not move, and be careful that you do not show yourself.

SCENE V

TARTUFFE, ELMIRE, ORGON [*Under the table*]

Tar. I am told that you wish to speak with me here.

El. Yes, I have important things to reveal to you. But shut this door before I begin, and look everywhere to see if any one can overhear us. [TARTUFFE *goes to shut the door and returns.*] It will never do to risk having over again such an affair as that of this morning. Never in my life was I so taken by surprise, and Damis put me in a terrible fright on your account. You saw how I tried all I could to baffle his design and to calm his anger. My confusion was so great, it is true that the thought of denying his accusations never came to my mind. But, thank Heaven, it is all for the best, and things are through it on a much safer footing. The esteem in which you are held has dispersed the storm; and my husband can have no suspicion of you, for, in order to set at defiance ill-natured comments, he wishes us to be constantly together. I can therefore be locked up here alone with you without fear of incurring blame; and thus I feel authorized to open to you a heart too forward perhaps in answering your love.

Tar. This language, madam, is somewhat hard for me to understand. You spoke but lately in a very different strain.

El. Ah! if such a refusal has offended you, how little you know the heart of woman, and how little you understand what we mean when we so feebly defend ourselves! At such times our modesty always struggles against any tender feelings a

lover inspires. Whatever reasons we may find to justify the love that conquers us, there is always a certain shame attached to the avowal of it. At first we try to avoid this avowal, but from our manner it is easy to see that our heart surrenders; that, simply for the sake of honour, our lips refuse to give words to our wishes; and that, while refusing, we promise everything.—I feel that I am making a very free confession to you, and not sparing woman's modesty; but I have begun, and will continue.—Should I have been so anxious to restrain Damis; should I have listened, think you, with so much calmness to your declaration throughout, and have taken the thing as you know I did, if the offer of your heart had not been a pleasure to me? When I tried to make you renounce the match which had just been proposed, what could you infer from such an action, if it was not that I felt interested in you, and that I should have experienced great sorrow if by such a marriage you had divided that affection which I wanted wholly to be mine?

Tar. It is certainly, madam, an extreme delight to hear such words from the lips of one we love; and their honey diffuses through all my senses a soothing softness I never knew till now. To please you is the supreme study of my life, and to be sure of your love my greatest happiness. Yet, forgive me, madam, if my heart somewhat doubts its felicity, and fancies that these words may be a specious artifice to make me break off the marriage which is soon to take place; and if I may speak openly to you, I shall not trust such sweet language unless some of the favours after which I sigh have assured me of their sincerity, and fix in my mind a sure belief in the enchanting goodness your bear for me.

El. [*After having coughed to draw her husband's attention.*] What! would you proceed so fast, and from the first exhaust the tenderness of my heart? I do myself violence to make you a sweet declaration of love; yet this is not enough for you, and to satisfy you the affair must be pushed even to the last extreme.

Tar. The less we deserve a blessing, the less we dare to hope for it. Love can not feel secure with words only. We easily suspect a lot brimful of happiness, and we must enjoy the

possession of it, before we can believe in it. I feel myself so unworthy of your favours that I doubt the success of my boldness, and I will believe nothing, madam, before you give real proofs.

El. Alas! how tyrannical your passion is! How it bewilders my mind! With what fierce sway it takes possession of my heart, and with what violence it exacts what it desires! Is there no avoiding your pursuit? and will you not allow me time to breathe? Is it right that you should persist so peremptorily? Should you exact what you desire with such tenacity, and thus abuse by your pressing ardour the weakness that you see I have for you?

Tar. But if you receive my love with kindness, why refuse me convincing proof?

El. But how can I consent to what you ask without offending Heaven, of which you are always speaking?

Tar. If it is only Heaven you can oppose to my wishes, it is nothing for me to remove such an obstacle; and that ought not to be a restraint to your love.

El. But they make us so terribly afraid of the judgments of Heaven!

Tar. I can, madam, dissipate these ridiculous terrors, and I understand the art of allaying scruples. It is true that Heaven forbids certain gratifications, but there are means of compounding with it upon such matters, and of rectifying the evil of the act by the purity of the intention.[1] We shall be able to initiate you into all those secrets, madam; all you have to do is to suffer yourself to be led by me. Satisfy my wishes and be without fear. I will be answerable for everything and take the sin upon myself. [ELMIRE *coughs louder.*] You cough very much, madam.

El. Yes, I am suffering torture.

Tar. Will you accept a piece of this liquorice?

El. It is an obstinate cold, and I see plainly that all the liquorice in the world will do no good in this case.

Tar. That is certainly very trying.

El. Yes, more than can be expressed.

[1] It is a scoundrel who speaks.—Note by Molière.

Tar. In short, your scruples, madam, are easy to remove. You are sure of an inviolable secrecy with me, and it is only publicity that makes the wrong. The scandal is what constitutes the offence, and to sin in secret is not to sin at all.[1]

El. [*Coughing and knocking the table.*] Well, I have no alternative but to yield, that I must consent to grant you everything, and that unless I do so I must not expect to satisfy or to convince. It is surely very hard to come to this, and I give way much against my will; but since it seems a settled thing that I should be driven to it, since I can not be believed without more convincing proofs, in spite of all I may say, I must perforce make up my mind to it and give satisfaction. If my thus consenting carries any offence with it, so much the worse for him who forces me to do this violence to myself. The fault certainly can not be accounted mine.[2]

Tar. No, madam, I take it entirely upon myself, and the thing in itself——

El. Just open this door, I pray you, and see if my husband is not in the passage.

Tar. There is no need, madam, to trouble about him. Between ourselves, he is a man to be led by the nose. He is more likely to be proud of finding us together, and I have brought him to the point of seeing everything without believing in anything.

El. All the same, go for a moment and look everywhere very carefully, I beg of you.

SCENE VI

ORGON, ELMIRE

Org. [*Coming from under the table.*] We have here, I acknowledge, an abominable scoundrel. I can not get over it; I feel stunned.

El. What! you come out so soon! You are jesting. Go under the table again; it is not time yet; wait to see the end in order to feel quite sure, and don't trust to mere surmises.

[1] See Pascal, seventh "Lettre Provinciale."

[2] It is scarcely necessary to say that Elmire is really speaking to her husband.

Org. No, never did hell produce anything more wicked!

El. Nonsense! you should not believe things too lightly. Be sure that you feel quite convinced before you surrender, and be in no hurry, for fear of a mistake.

[*She hides* ORGON *behind her.*

SCENE VII

TARTUFFE, ELMIRE, ORGON.

Tar. [*Not seeing* ORGON.] Everything is propitious to me. I have searched every room; there is no one there; and my delighted soul——

[TARTUFFE *goes with open arms to embrace* ELMIRE; *she draws back and* TARTUFFE *sees* ORGON.

Org. [*Stopping* TARTUFFE.] Gently, gently, you yield too freely to your amorous transports, and you should be less imperious in your desires. Oh! oh! holy man, you wanted to make a fool of me! How you give way to temptation! You marry my daughter, and covet my wife! I for a long time doubted if you were in earnest, and I expected every moment that you would change your tone, but this is carrying the proof far enough; I am satisfied, and I require no further test.

El. [*To* TARTUFFE.] It is much against my inclination that I have done all this, but I have been driven to the necessity of treating you thus.

Tar. [*To* ORGON.] What! can you believe——

Org. Come, no noise; out of this house, and without ceremony.

Tar. My intention——

Org. Your speeches are no longer in season; leave this house at once.

Tar. It is for you to leave the house, you who speak as if you were master here. The house belongs to me, and I will make you know it. I will soon show you that it is vain for you to resort to these base falsehoods to quarrel with me. You little know what you do when you insult me. I can confound and punish imposture, avenge offended Heaven, and make those repent who speak of driving me hence.

SCENE VIII

ELMIRE, ORGON.

El. What language is this? What is it he means?

Org. Alas! I feel quite confused, and have little reason to laugh.

El. What is it?

Org. What he says shows me my error, and the deed of gift troubles my mind.

El. The deed of gift?

Org. Yes, the thing is done. But I have something else to make me anxious.

El. And what is that?

Org. I will tell you everything; but first let us see if a certain casket is still upstairs.

ACT V

SCENE I

ORGON, CLÉANTE

CLÉANTE. Where are you running?

Org. Alas! how can I tell?

Clé. It seems to me that the first thing to be done is to consult together, and to see what steps we can take in this emergency.

Org. This casket troubles me terribly; I am more distressed about it than about all the rest put together.

Clé. Does this casket contain any important secret?

Org. It is a trust which Argan, my unfortunate friend, intrusted to my keeping with great secrecy. He chose me of all others when he fled. It contains papers, he told me, on which his life and fortune depend.

Clé. How, then, could you trust them into other hands?

Org. A scruple of conscience made me go straight to the scoundrel to confide in him; by his sophistry he persuaded me to give him the casket to keep, so that in case of any inquiry I

might have ready at hand a subterfuge to ease my conscience, while taking oath contrary to the truth.[1]

Clé. According to appearances you are in a very awkward position; the deed of gift and this confidence, to speak to you frankly, are steps which you have taken with little consideration; you may be led far with such pledges. This man has such power over you, that it is a great imprudence in you to irritate him, and you would do better to look for some gentler means of settling with him.

Org. What! to hide such a double and wicked heart under so fair a semblance of ardent piety! And I, who took in a begging pauper——There, it's all over; I renounce all pious people, I shall have the greatest abhorrence for them, and shall be worse than the devil to them in future.

Clé. Just like you! Now we have another fit of excess: you never keep within bounds in anything; you never listen to healthy common sense, and always rush from one extreme to another. You see your mistake and acknowledge that you were deceived by a false appearance of piety; but to make up for this, what necessity is there to be guilty of a worse mistake? Why should you make no difference between the heart of a rascally villain and that of every good man? Because a scoundrel has shamelessly imposed upon you under the solemn mask of austerity, must you go and fancy that everybody is like him, and that there are no sincere people in the world? Leave such inferences to unbelievers; distinguish virtue from its appearance; never be too hasty in giving your esteem, and avoid either extreme. Keep, if you can, from doing homage to imposture, but at the same time do not injure true piety. And if you must lean toward one extreme, better to offend as you already have done.

SCENE II

Orgon, Cléante, Damis

Da. What, father, is it true that the rascal threatens you, that he has lost the remembrance of all you have done for him,

[1] This is the Jesuitical doctrine of "mental reservation" which Tartuffe has taught to Orgon, just as he wished to teach Elmire that of "purity of intention." (See Pascal on "Mental Reservation.")

and that in his cowardly and shameless arrogance he makes use of your own goodness as an arm against you?

Org. Yes, even so, my son; and I can not tell you what intolerable grief it is to me.

Da. Leave him to me. I will crop his ears for him; no one should hesitate to punish such insolence; I will rid you of him, and end all this business. I must crush him.

Clé. You speak exactly like a foolish young fellow. Keep these violent outbursts within bounds, I pray you. We live under a king and in an age when we gain little by violence.

SCENE III

MADAME PERNELLE, ORGON, ELMIRE, CLEANTE, MARIANNE, DAMIS, DORINE

Per. What is all this I hear? What dreadful, mysterious reports are these?

Org. They are strange things which I have witnessed with my own eyes; and you see how I am rewarded for all my goodness. I kindly pick up a poor destitute fellow; I take him into my own house, and treat him like my own brother; I heap favours upon him every day; I give him my daughter, and everything I possess; and yet, in the meanwhile, the perfidious and infamous rascal forms the wicked project of seducing my wife; and not satisfied with so base an attempt, he now dares to threaten me with my own gifts. He is making use, for my own ruin, of those advantages which my indiscreet kindness has put into his hands; he is trying to deprive me of my estates, and to reduce me to the state of beggary from whence I rescued him.

Dor. Poor man!

Per. I can never believe, my son, that he would commit so base an action.

Org. What?

Per. Good people are always subject to envy.

Org. What do you mean, mother?

Per. That you live after a strange sort here, and that I am but too well aware of the ill-will they all bear him.

Org. What has this ill-will to do with what I have just told you?

Per. I have told it you a hundred times when you were young, that in this world virtue is ever liable to persecution, and that, although the envious die, envy never dies.

Org. But what has this to do with what has happened to-day?

Per. They have concocted a hundred foolish stories against him.

Org. I have already told you that I saw it all myself.

Per. The malice of evil-disposed persons is very great.

Org. You would make me swear, mother! I tell you that I saw his audacious attempt with my own eyes.

Per. Evil tongues have always some venom to pour forth; and here below there is nothing proof against them.

Org. You are maintaining a very senseless argument. I saw it, I tell you; saw it with my own eyes; what you can call s-a-w, saw! Must I din it over and over into your ears, and shout as loud as half a dozen people?

Per. Gracious goodness! appearances often deceive us. We must not always judge by what we see.

Org. I shall go mad.

Per. We are by nature prone to judge wrongly, and good is often mistaken for evil.

Org. I ought to look upon his desire of seducing my wife as charitable?

Per. You ought to have good reasons before you accuse another, and you should have waited till you were quite sure of the fact.

Org. Heaven save the mark! how could I be more sure? I suppose, mother, I ought to have waited till——you will make me say something foolish.

Per. In short, his soul is possessed with too pure a zeal, and I can not possibly conceive that he would think of attempting what you accuse him of.

Org. If you were not my mother I really don't know what I might not say to you, you make me so savage.

Dor. [*To* ORGON.] A fair repayment of things in this world; you would believe nobody, and now you are not believed yourself.

Clé. We are wasting in mere trifles the precious time which

we ought to employ in devising what measures to take. We should not sleep when a villain threatens us.

Da. What! you think his impudence can go so far as——

El. I hardly think it possible. His ingratitude would be too glaring, were he to carry his threats into execution.

Clé. Do not trust to that. He will find means to justify his doings against you, and, for a less matter than this, people have been involved in sad troubles. I repeat it: knowing all the arms he had against you, you should not have pushed him so far.

Org. You are right; but what could I do? In the face of that scoundrel's impudence I was not master of my own resentment.

Clé. I wish it were possible to patch up a truce between you.

El. If I had only known what he had in his possession, I would not have given cause for such uneasiness, and my——

Org. [*To* Dorine, *on seeing* Mr. Loyal *coming.*] What does that man want? Go at once and find out. I am, indeed, in a fit state of mind for people to come and see me!

SCENE IV

Orgon, Madame Pernelle, Elmire, Marianne, Cléante, Damis, Dorine, Mr. Loyal

Loyal. [*To* Dorine *at the farther part of the stage.*] Good day, my dear sister; pray let me speak to your master.

Dor. He is with friends, and I do not think he can see any one just now.

Loy. I would not be intrusive. I feel sure that he will find nothing unpleasant in my visit; in fact, I come for something which will be very gratifying to him.

Dor. What is your name?

Loy. Only tell him that I come from Mr. Tartuffe, for his benefit.

Dor. [*To* Orgon.] It is a man who comes in a civil way from Mr. Tartuffe, on some business which will make you glad, he says.

Clé. [*To* Orgon.] You must see who it is, and what the man wants.

Org. [*To* CLÉANTE.] He is coming, perhaps, to settle matters between us in a friendly way. How, in this case, ought I to behave to him?

Clé. Don't show your resentment, and, if he speaks of an agreement, listen to him.

Loy. [*To* ORGON.] Your servant, sir; may Heaven punish whoever wrongs you, and may it be as favourable to you, sir, as I wish.

Org. [*Aside to* CLÉANTE.] This pleasant beginning agrees with my conjectures, and augurs some sort of reconciliation.

Loy. All your family was always dear to me, and I served your father.

Org. Sir, I am sorry and ashamed to say that I do not know who you are, neither do I remember your name.

Loy. My name is Loyal; I was born in Normandy,[1] and am a royal bailiff in spite of envy. For the last forty years I have had the good fortune to fill the office, thanks to Heaven, with great credit; and I come, sir, with your leave, to serve you the writ of a certain order.

Org. What! you are here——

Loy. Gently, sir, I beg. It is merely a summons; a notice for you to leave this place, you and yours, to take away all your goods and chattels, and make room for others, without delay or adjournment, as hereby decreed.

Org. I! leave this place?

Loy. Yes, sir, if you please. The house incontestably belongs, as you are well aware, to the good Mr. Tartuffe. He is now lord and master of your estates, according to a deed I have in my keeping. It is in due form, and can not be challenged.

Da. [*To* MR. LOYAL.] This great impudence is, indeed, worthy of all admiration.

Loy. [*To* DAMIS.] Sir, I have nothing at all to do with you. [*Pointing to* ORGON.] My business is with this gentleman. He is tractable and gentle, and knows too well the duty of a gentleman to try and oppose authority.

Org. But——

[1] The Normans have the reputation of being very cunning and cautious, and also of being fond of going to law.

Loy. Yes, sir, I know that you would not for anything show contumacy; and that you will allow me, like a reasonable man, to execute the orders I have received.

Da. You may chance to catch a good drubbing on your black skirt, Mr. Bailiff, I assure you.

Loy. [*To* Orgon.] Sir, see that your son keeps silent or retires. I should be sorry to be forced to put your name down in my official report.

Da. [*Aside.*] This Mr. Loyal has a strangely disloyal look.

Loy. I feel greatly for all good men, and I wished to take the business upon myself in order to oblige you and to render you service. By so doing I prevented the choice from falling upon others, who might not have had the same consideration that I have for you, and might have proceeded in a less gentle manner.

Org. And what worse thing can be done than to order people to go out of their house?

Loy. I will allow you time, and will suspend until to-morrow, sir, the execution of the writ. I shall only come, without noise or scandal, to spend the night here with ten of my people. For form's sake, you must, if you please, bring me the keys before going to bed. I shall be careful not to trouble your rest, and to suffer nothing unseemly to happen. To-morrow morning you must, however, exert yourself and clear the house to the very last thing. My men will help you in this; I have chosen them strong, so that they might assist you in removing everything. Nobody can act better than I am doing, I feel sure; and, as I treat you with the greatest consideration, I will ask of you, sir, to act as well by me, and to see that I am in no way hindered in the execution of my duty.

Org. [*Aside.*] I'd give the hundred best louis which are left me, to be able to administer to that ugly face of his the soundest blows that were ever dealt.

Clé. [*Aside to* Orgon.] Forbear, and don't make things worse.

Da. Before such strange insolence I can hardly restrain myself, and my fingers itch to be at him.

Dor. To such a broad back, in good faith, Mr. Loyal, a sound cudgelling would not seem out of place.

Loy. Such shameful words may be punished, my dear, and women, too, are answerable to the law.

Clé. [*To* MR. LOYAL.] Enough, sir; enough. Give us the paper, please, and go.

Loy. Good-day. May Heaven bless ye all!

Org. And may it confound both you and the scoundrel who sends you!

SCENE V

ORGON, MADAME PERNELLE, ELMIRE, CLÉANTE, MARIANNE, DAMIS, DORINE

Org. Well! mother, you see whether I am right; and you can judge of the rest by the writ. Do you at last acknowledge his rascality?

Per. I am thunderstruck, and can scarcely believe my eyes and ears.

Dor. [*To* ORGON.] You are wrong, sir, to complain, and wrong to blame him. His pious intentions are thus confirmed. His love for his neighbour is great; he knows that riches often corrupt men, and it is out of pure charity that he takes away from you all that may prove a hindrance to your salvation.

Org. Must I always be reminding you to hold your tongue?

Clé. [*To* ORGON.] Let us go and see what course we had better follow.

El. Yes, go; expose the insolent ingratitude of the wretch. Such a proceeding must destroy the validity of the deed. His perfidy will appear too odious for him to be able to obtain the success he trusts in.

SCENE VI

VALÈRE, ORGON, MADAME PERNELLE, ELMIRE, CLÉANTE, MARIANNE, DAMIS, DORINE

Val. It is with regret, sir, that I come to distress you, but I am forced to it by the urgency of the danger. A friend with whom I am most intimate, and who knows what interest I take in all that concerns you, has, for my sake, by delicate means, broken through the secrecy we owe to the affairs of state, and has just sent me intelligence, the purport of which is that you had better have recourse to immediate flight. The villain who

has so long imposed on you, an hour ago accused you before the king; and, among other charges which he brings against you, he has put in his hands the important casket of a state criminal, of whom, he said, you kept the guilty secret in contempt of your duty as a subject. I am not informed of the particulars of the crime laid to your charge, but a warrant is issued against you, and, the better to execute it, he himself is appointed to accompany the person who is to arrest you.

Clé. Now his pretensions are strengthened; this is how the scoundrel seeks to possess himself of your estate.

Org. Man is, I must own, a wretched animal!

Val. The least delay may prove fatal to you. I have my coach at the door, so as to take you away at once, and a thousand louis which I have brought for you. Lose no time; the blow is crushing, and one which can only be parried by flight. I will take you myself to a place of safety, and will accompany you to the last in your escape.

Org. Alas! what thanks do I not owe to your kindness? I must put off to another time my thanks to you for it. I pray Heaven it may be given to me to acknowledge this generous help. Farewell! take care, all of you——

Clé. Go quickly. We shall see that everything necessary is done.

SCENE VII

TARTUFFE, A POLICE OFFICER, MADAME PERNELLE, ORGON, ELMIRE, CLÉANTE, MARIANNE, VALÈRE, DAMIS, DORINE

Tar. [*Stopping* ORGON.] Gently, sir, gently; not so fast, I beg. You have not far to go to find a lodging. You are a prisoner in the king's name.

Org. Wretch! you have reserved this shaft for the last; by it you finish me, and crown all your perfidies.

Tar. Your abuse has no power to disturb me, and I know how to suffer everything for the sake of Heaven.

Clé. Your moderation is really great, we must acknowledge.

Da. How impudently the infamous wretch sports with Heaven!

Tar. Your anger can not move me; I have no other wish but to fulfil my duty.

Mar. You may claim great glory from the performance of this duty; it is a very honourable employment for you.

Tar. The employment can not be otherwise than glorious, when it comes from the power that sends me here.

Org. But do you remember that my charitable hand, ungrateful scoundrel, raised you from a state of misery?

Tar. Yes, I know what help I have received from you; but the interest of my king is my first duty. The just obligation of this sacred duty stifles in my heart all other claims, and I would sacrifice to it friend, wife, relations, and myself with them.

El. The impostor!

Dor. With what treacherous cunning he makes a cloak of all that men revere!

Clé. But if the zeal you speak of is so perfect, how is it that to show it, you wait till he has surprised you making love to his wife? How is it that you inform against him only after self-respect forces him to send you away? I will not say that the gift of all his possessions he made over to you should have prevented you from doing your duty, but, since you wished to treat him as a criminal, why did you consent to accept anything from him?

Tar. [*To the* OFFICER.] I beg of you, sir, to deliver me from all this noise, and to act according to the orders you have received.

Officer. I have certainly put off too long the discharge of my duty, and you very rightly remind me of it. To execute my order, follow me immediately to the prison in which a place is assigned to you.

Tar. Who? I, sir?

Officer. Yes, you.

Tar. Why to prison?

Officer. To you I have no account to render. [*To* ORGON.] Pray, sir, recover from your great alarm. We live under a king who is an enemy to fraud; a king who can read the heart, and whom all the arts of impostors can not deceive. His great mind, endowed with delicate discernment, at all times sees things in their true light. He is never betrayed into exaggeration, and his sound reason knows not excess. On

men of worth he bestows immortal glory; but he dispenses his favours without blindness, and his love for the truly great does not prevent him from feeling the horror which the vicious must inspire. This man had no chance of deceiving him, for he has pierced through more subtle snares. His clear insight enabled him at once to discover the baseness of his heart. Coming to accuse you, he betrayed himself, and by the even-handed justice of supreme equity discovered himself to be a notorious rascal, of whom, under another name, the king has already received information. His life is a long list of dark deeds, and would fill volumes. Our king, in a word, abhorring his base ingratitude and dishonesty toward you, has added it to his other crimes, and has placed me under his orders only to see how far his impudence would carry him, and to oblige him to give you full satisfaction. Yes, he has ordered me to take away from him, before you, all the documents he says he has of yours. He annuls, by his sovereign will, the terms of the contract by which you give him your property. He moreover forgives you this secret offence in which you were involved by the flight of your friend. This to reward the zeal which you once showed for him in maintaining his rights, and to prove that his heart, when it is least expected, knows how to recompense a good action. Merit with him is never lost, and he remembers good better than evil.

Dor. Heaven be thanked!

Per. Ah! I breathe again.

El. What a favourable end to our troubles!

Mar. Who would have foretold it?

Org. [*To* TARTUFFE, *as the* OFFICER *leads him off.*] Ah! wretch, now you are——

SCENE VIII

MADAME PERNELLE, ORGON, ELMIRE, MARIANNE, CLÉANTE, VALÈRE, DAMIS, DORINE

Clé. Ah! brother, forbear, and do not descend to abuse. Leave the wretch to his evil destiny, and do not add to the remorse that crushes him. Better hope that his heart will now, by a happy change, become virtuous; and that, reforming his life through the detestation of his crimes, he may soften the

justice of our glorious king; while you must go and thank him on your knees for his goodness and leniency to you.

Org. Yes, you are right; let us, with joy, throw ourselves at his feet, and praise the goodness he shows toward us. Then, having acquitted ourselves of this first duty, let us think of another, and by a happy wedding crown in Valère the ardour of a generous and sincere lover.



JEAN BAPTISTE RACINE

From an engraving by Gerard Edelinck

ATHALIAH

BY

JEAN BAPTISTE RACINE

Jean Baptiste Racine was born in La Ferté-Milon, a small village near Soissons, December 21, 1639. His father was collector of the salt-tax at La Ferté. Racine's mother died while he was still a small child, and his father, who had married again, died soon afterward; but the boy and his one sister, Marie, who died in 1663, were well cared for by relatives. Racine had far greater advantages in the way of culture than were common to the literary men of his time. He attended the College of Beauvais, probably from 1650 to 1655. In 1655 he entered Port Royal, where he remained three years under the strict discipline of such instructors as Claude Lancelot, Nicole, and Le Maître. Here he evinced his first likings for poetry and romance, forbidden subjects, which caused his good teachers much uneasiness. A year in Paris, at the Collége d'Harcourt, completed his education. Here he gave full swing to his taste for social pleasures, and this, together with his association with actors and actresses —he had already begun to look to the stage—completed the break with his Port-Royalist brethren. Here he met La Fontaine, Chapelain, and Le Vasseur, and in 1660 attracted the attention of Louis XIV by his "La Nymphe de la Seine," an ode on the marriage of that monarch to the Infanta Maria Theresa. In November, 1661, he went to Uzès, in Languedoc, to study theology under his uncle, Père Sconin, vicar of the diocese, in hopes of obtaining a benefice. Through ill-luck and his dislike for the work he failed, and in 1663 he was back in Paris, where with the aid of Molière he produced his first plays, "La Thébaïde" (1664) and "Alexandre le Grand" (1665). A flattering ode on the king's recovery from measles brought him, in August, 1664, a pension of 600 francs, the first of many rich gifts from the Court. From this time dates the much-overrated friendship of "the four"—Boileau, La Fontaine, Molière, and Racine. With Boileau it lasted until death; but Racine unjustly quarrelled and broke friendship with Molière, who had rendered him valuable assistance, over a transaction in which Molière appears to have been very little at fault. He carefully fostered his rivalry with Corneille, and, stung by one of Nicole's "Lettres Visionnaires" (1666), made that brilliant but disgraceful attack upon Port Royal and his old instructors that he so heartily regretted throughout his life. During the thirteen years that followed he produced "Andromaque" (1667); "Les Plaideurs," his only comedy (1668); "Britannicus" (1669); "Bérénice" (1670); "Bajazet" (1672); "Mithridate" (1673); and "Iphigénie" (1675). "Phèdre" (1677) was a temporary failure on account of a conspiracy in support of the rival "Phèdre" of Phaon. Racine retired from the stage in disgust, was converted, and, through the mediation of Boileau, made his peace with the Port-Royalists. On June 1, 1677, he married Catherine de Romanet. His wife brought him a small fortune, he had found ample profit in the drama, and his pension had grown to 2,000 livres; in addition, he was treasurer of France at Moulin, and in 1677 was appointed, with Boileau, historiographer-royal, with a salary of 4,000 livres. In 1673 he took his seat in the Academy. At the request of Madame de Maintenon for a play suitable for her girls at Saint-Cyr, he wrote "Esther" (1689), and, encouraged by its success, "Athalie" in 1691. Neither of these was played in public until after his death. Four "Cantiques Spirituelles" and a "History of Port Royal" make up the remainder of his literary work. He died April 21, 1699, and was buried, at his own request, in Port Royal.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Joash, King of Judah and son of Ahaziah.
Athaliah, widow of Joram and grandmother of Joash.
Jehoiada, the High Priest.
Jehosheba, aunt of Joash and wife of the High Priest.
Zachariah, son of Jehoiada and Jehosheba.
Salome, sister of Zachariah.
Abner, one of the Chief Officers of the Kings of Judah.
Azariah, Ishmael, and the three other Chiefs of the Priests and Levites.
Mattan, an Apostate Priest; Chief Priest of Baal.
Nabal, confidential friend of Mattan.
Hagar, an attendant of Athaliah.
Band of Priests and Levites.
Attendants of Athaliah.
Nurse of Joash.
Chorus of Young Maidens of the Tribe of Levi.

The Scene is laid in the Temple at Jerusalem, in an Antechamber of the High Priest's Dwelling

ATHALIAH

ACT I

SCENE I

JEHOIADA, ABNER

ABNER. Yea, to the Temple of the Lord I come,
To worship with the solemn rites of old,
To celebrate with thee the famous day
When from the holy mount our Law was giv'n.
How times are changed! Soon as the sacred trump
With joyous blast announced this day's return,
The Temple porticoes, with garlands gay,
Could not contain the crowds of the devout;
Before the altar they in order due,
Bringing the earliest harvest of their fields,
Offered those first-fruits to the Lord of all;
Nor were there priests enough for sacrifice.
A woman's will has dared to check these throngs,
And turn'd the day's bright glory into gloom.
Scarce dare a few most zealous worshippers
Recall for us some shadow of the past;
The rest are all forgetful of their God,
Or, e'en to Baal's altars flocking now,
In shameful orgies learn to bear their part,
And curse the Name on which their fathers call'd.
My soul is troubled—naught will I conceal—
Lest Athaliah visit upon thee

Her vengeance, spurn all remnant of respect,
And tear thee from the altar of the Lord.

Jehoiada. Whence comes to thee this presage dark to-day?

Abner. Holy and righteous, how canst thou escape?
Long has she hated that rare constancy
That adds new brilliance to thy mitred brow;
Long has she treated thy religious zeal
As obstinate sedition and revolt.
The shining virtues of thy faithful spouse
Have earned the special hatred of the Queen.
If Aaron's priesthood has devolved on thee,
Thy wife is sister to our latest king.
Mattan, moreover, that apostate priest,
His foul desertion from our altars crowns
With eager persecution of all good,
And, worse than Athaliah, spurs her on.
'Tis not enough that in a foreign garb
The Levite serves at Baal's altar now,
This Temple is to him a sore offence,
And he would fain destroy the God he left.
No means he leaves untried to ruin thee,
And undermines with praise no less than blame.
He feigns for thee a treacherous kindliness,
Masking the blackness of his venom thus.
Sometimes he prompts the Queen to dread thy power,
And sometimes, looking to her lust for gold,
Pretends that somewhere known to thee alone,
Thou hidest treasures David had amass'd.
For two days past the proud imperious Queen
Has seem'd as though consumed by baffled spite.
I saw her yesterday with furious eyes
Glare at this sacred place, and mark'd her well,
As if within the Temple's deep recess
Lurk'd God's avenger arm'd to punish her.
The more I think thereon, the less I doubt
On thee her wrath is ready now to burst,
And that, with all her mother's thirst for blood,
E'en in His shrine she will defy our God.

Jehoiada. He who enchains the fury of the waves
Knows how to curb the plots of wicked men.
Submitting humbly to His holy will,
I fear my God, and know no other fear.
And yet, I thank thee, Abner, for thy zeal
That o'er my peril keeps a watchful eye.
I see injustice chafes thine inmost heart,
Thou art a faithful son of Israel still.
For that may Heaven be bless'd! But secret wrath
And passive worth, art thou content with these?
Is faith sincere, if it declines to act?
An impious foreigner for eight long years
Has David's throne usurp'd, with all its rights,
Unpunish'd waded in our princes' blood,
Foul murderess of the children of her son,
And e'en against our God has raised her arm.
And thou, a pillar of this trembling state,
Bred in the camp of good Jehoshaphat,
Under his son Jehoram in command,
On whom alone our towns in terror lean'd
When Ahaziah's unexpected death
Scattered his armies before Jehu's face,
Say'st thou—"I fear the Lord and own His truth!"
Lo, by my mouth to thee the Lord replies:
"What boots it that thou boast zeal for My Law?
Thinkest to honour me by barren vows?
What fruit have I of all thy sacrifice?
Need I the blood of heifers and of goats?
Thy princes' blood cries out, and is not heard.
Break, break all compact with impiety,
Root up the crimes amidst My people rife,
And come and sacrifice thy victims then."

Abner. What can I do? The people have lost heart,
Judah is cow'd, and Benjamin is weak;
The day that saw their royal line extinct
Extinguish'd all their ancient valour too.
The Lord Himself, they say, withdraws from us.
Though once so jealous of his people's praise;
He sees unmoved their majesty abased,

And His compassion is at last worn out.
No more for us His mighty arm outstretch'd
With countless marvels terrifies our foes;
His Ark is dumb—utters no oracle.

Jehoiada. Yet when did miracles abound as now?
When by more signs has God display'd His power?
Will ye have always eyes that can not see,
Ungrateful people? Shall His mightiest deeds
Strike on your ears, nor ever move your hearts?
Say, my dear Abner, must I needs repeat
The wonders brought to pass in these our days;
The signal fall of Israel's tyrant kings,
And God found faithful to perform His threats;
Ahab destroy'd, and with his blood defiled
The plot of land which murder had usurp'd;
Hard by that fatal field Jezebel slain,
A Queen down trampled under horse's hoofs,
The dogs that licked up her inhuman blood,
The mangled limbs of her dishonour'd corpse;
The troop of lying prophets brought to shame,
The fire from heav'n that on the altar fell;
Elijah's voice ruling the elements,
The skies thereby shut up, the earth like brass,
For three whole years left without rain or dew;
The dead arising at Elisha's word?
Recall, O Abner, these portentous signs,
God is to-day as He has always been,
He can unfold His glory when He will,
And ever in His mind His people dwell.

Abner. But where the promises so often made
To David and to Solomon his son?
Alas! We hoped that from their fruitful stock
Kings were to issue in a numerous train;
That over every nation, tribe, and tongue
One of their lineage should extend his sway,
Should everywhere make war and strife to cease,
And at his footstool see earth's proudest kings.

Jehoiada. And why distrust the promises of Heaven?

Abner. That son of David, where shall he be found?

Can Heav'n itself restore the living sap
Of that dry tree, now wither'd at the root?
E'en in his cradle Athaliah slew
The babe, and eight years after can he live?
Ah! might it be her fury miss'd its aim,
That of our royal blood some drop escaped——

Jehoiada. What wouldst thou do?

Abner. O happy day for me!
How gladly would I go to meet my king!
Doubt not that to his feet our eager tribes—
But wherefore mock me with these idle dreams?
Ill-fated heir of our victorious kings,
We had but Ahaziah, with his sons;
By Jehu's darts I saw the father slain,
And thou his sons by his own mother murder'd.

Jehoiada. I can not now explain; but when the sun
Shall the third portion of his course complete,
Bringing the morning hour that bids to prayer,
Hither return and with the self-same zeal.
Then God may prove to thee by gracious deeds
His word is faithful still, and never fails.
So, for this solemn day I must prepare,
And dawn already gilds the temple roof.

Abner. What gracious deed is this, to me unknown?
Tow'rd thee Jehosheba directs her steps;
I leave thee, and will join the faithful band
Brought hither by this solemn festival.

SCENE II

JEHOIADA, JEHOSHEBA

Jehoiada. Princess, the time is come for us to speak,
Thy happy theft can be no longer hid.
The insults of the enemies of God,
Abusing this our silence, have too long
Charged with unfaithfulness His promises.
Nay more; success has animated rage,
And Athaliah would to Baal burn,
E'en in God's courts, incense idolatrous,

Rear'd in His Temple 'neath th' Almighty's wing,
'Tis ours to show the King thine hands have saved.
He'll prove himself courageous as his sires,
Already in his wit beyond his age.
Ere I unfold his wondrous destiny,
I offer him to God by Whom kings reign;
Then, gathering straight our Levites and our priests,
I will proclaim their masters' long-lost heir.

Jehosheba. Knows he his name and noble fortune yet?

Jehoiada. He owns no other than Eliakim,
And thinks himself some foundling left to die,
Whom I in pity treated as my son.

Jehosheba. Ah! from what perils I deliver'd him!
What danger is he now to meet once more!

Jehoiada. What! Fails thy faith already in alarm?

Jehosheba. My lord, I yield me to thy counsels wise.
Since first I snatch'd this precious babe from death,
I placed his welfare in thy careful hands;
Yea, dreading e'en the fervour of my love,
I shun his presence where and when I can,
For fear lest my unguarded heart betray
My secret with the tears I can not check.
Three days and nights I thought that duty bade
Devote to weeping and impassion'd prayer.
Yet may it be allowed me now to ask,
What friends thou hast ready to take thy side?
Abner, brave Abner, will he lend his aid?
Say, has he sworn to stand beside his King?

Jehoiada. Abner, though on his faith we may rely,
Knows not as yet that any King is ours.

Jehosheba. Who is to guard young Joash? Wilt thou trust
Obed or Amnon with so high a charge?
My father's kindness they have often proved——

Jehoiada. And sold themselves to Athaliah's will.

Jehosheba. Whom to her hirelings wilt thou then oppose?

Jehoiada. Have I not said? Our Levites and our priests.

Jehosheba. I know that, secretly assembled near,
Their numbers have been doubled by thy care;

That full of love for thee, horror for her,
A great oath binds them, ere the trial come,
To David's heir when he shall be reveal'd.
But though with loyal ardour they may burn,
Can they unaided vindicate their king?
Is zeal enough to cope with such a task?
Doubt not the Queen, when the first rumour spreads
Of Ahaziah's son in hiding here,
Will gather all her savage troops around,
Besiege the Temple, and break down its gates.
Against such foes will sanctity avail,
And holy hands raised to the Lord in prayer?
Their province is to intercede for guilt,
No blood but that of victims have they shed;
Joash, perchance, sore wounded in their arms——

Jehoiada. Countest as naught the God who fights for us?
God, who protects the orphan's innocence,
And e'en in weakness manifests His might;
God, who hates tyrants, and in Jezreel swore
He would root out Ahab and Jezebel;
Who, striking Joram, husband of their child,
And Joram's son, their family pursued;
Whose threatening arm, though for a time withheld,
Over that impious race is ever stretch'd?

Jehosheba. Yea, 'tis His righteous sentence on them all
That makes me tremble for my brother's son.
Who knows if he, inheriting their guilt,
Was not at birth condemn'd to share their fate?
Or whether God exempts him from the curse,
And will for David's sake his pardon seal?
Ah! his sad state when Heaven gave him me
Returns each moment to alarm my soul.
With slaughter'd princes was the chamber full;
Dagger in hand, th' inexorable Queen
To bloodshed urged her barbarous soldiery,
And eagerly her murderous course pursued!
Young Joash, left for dead, there met my eyes;
I seem to see his terror-stricken nurse
Still vainly crouching at the assassin's feet,

His drooping form clasp'd to her feeble breast.
I took him stain'd with blood. Bathing his face
My copious tears restored his vanish'd sense;
And, whether yet with fear or fond caress,
I felt the pressure of his tender arms.
Great God, forbid my love should be his bane,
Last relic of the faithful David now.
Bred in Thine House, and taught to love Thy Law,
He knows no other Father than Thyself.
If, ready to attack a murderous Queen,
Faith falters trembling at the danger nigh;
If flesh and blood, disquieted this day,
Have shed too many tears, alarm'd for him;
Heir of Thy holy promise, guard him well,
And for such weakness punish only me!

Jehoiada. Thy tears, Jehosheba, no blame deserve,
But God would have us trust Him as a Father.
He visits not with blind resentment sins
Of impious ancestors on pious sons.
All that remains of faithful Israel still
Will come to-day here to renew their vows;
Deep as their reverence for David's race,
They hold abhorr'd the child of Jezebel;
Joash will move them with his modest grace,
Seeming to light anew the glorious past;
And the Lord's Voice, making our cause His own,
Will in His Temple to their hearts appeal.
Two faithless kings in turn have Him defied,
Now must a monarch to the throne be raised
Whose grateful memory shall bless the day
When God by His own priests his rights restored,
Who pluck'd him from th' oblivion of the tomb,
And David's lamp rekindled when put out.
Great God, if Thy foreknowledge sees him base,
Bent to forsake the paths that David trod,
Then let him be like fruit ere ripeness pluck'd
Or flower wither'd by a noisome blast!
But if this child, obedient to Thy will,
Is destined to advance Thy wise designs,

Now let the rightful heir the sceptre sway,
Give to my feeble hands his pow'rful foes,
And baffle in her plots a cruel Queen.
Vouchsafe, my God, on Nathan and on her
That spirit of blind foolishness to pour
Which leads deluded monarchs to their fall!
No more; farewell. Our children with them bring
Maidens, of holiest stock the hallow'd seed.

SCENE III

Jehosheba, Zachariah, Salome, Chorus

Jehosheba. Dear Zachariah, go, nor stay thy steps,
Accompany thy venerable sire.
Daughters of Levi, young and faithful band,
Whom with His zeal the Lord already fires,
Who come so often here to share my sighs,
Children, my only joy in griefs profound;
These gay festoons and coronets of flow'rs
Once well accorded with our stately feasts,
But now, alas! when shame and sorrow reign,
What offering is more fit than one of tears!
Already do I hear the solemn trump,
Soon will the Temple doors be opened wide,
While thither I myself prepare to go,
Sing, praise the God whose presence here ye seek.

SCENE IV

The Chorus

All the Chorus Sings. His glory fills the universe sublime,
Lift to this God for aye the voice of prayer!
He reign'd supreme before the birth of time;
Sing of his loving care.
One Voice. [*Alone.*] Vainly unrighteous force
Would still His people's praise that must have course;
His name shall perish ne'er.
Day tells to-day His pow'r, from time to time;
His glory fills the universe sublime;
Sing of His loving care.

All the Chorus Repeats. His glory fills the universe sublime;
Sing of His loving care.
One Voice. [*Alone.*] He paints the flow'rs with all their lovely hues;
The fruit to ripeness grows,
For daily he bestows
The day's warm sunshine, and the night's cold dews,
Nor does the grateful earth t' o'erpay the debt refuse.
Another Voice. The sun at His command spreads joy around,
'Tis from His bounteous hand its light proceeds;
But in His law, so pure, so holy found,
We hail His richest gift to meet our needs.
Another. Oh! mount of Sinai, let the memory stay
Of that forever great and famous day,
When on thy flaming head,
In clouds conceal'd, the Lord reveal'd
To mortal eyes a ray from his own glory shed.
Tell us, why glowed those lightning fires up there,
Why roll'd the smoke, why peal'd in troubled air
Thunder and trumpet's blare?
Came He that, back to primal Chaos hurl'd,
On its foundations of past ages whirl'd,
Came he to shake the world?
Another. He came that He to Israel might reveal
Th' immortal lustre of His holy Law;
He came that to their hearts He might appeal,
To claim their lasting love, based upon reverent awe.
All the Chorus. O Law divine and full of grace!
Justice and goodness all supreme!
What reason and what joy extreme,
Our love and trust in such a God to place!
One Voice. [*Alone.*] From slavery's yoke he did our fathers save,
And for their desert-food sweet manna gave;
To us He gives His laws, all gifts above
Save of Himself; for all He only claims our love.
The Chorus. Justice and goodness all supreme!
The Same Voice. For them divided He the waters of the sea,
From the dry rock He made the torrent stream;

To us He gives His laws, all gifts above
Save of Himself, for all He only claims our love.
The Chorus. O Law divine and full of grace!
What reason, and what joy extreme,
Our love and trust in such a God to place!
Another Voice. [*Alone.*] You who can only know a servile fear,
Whose thankless souls God's goodness fails to move;
Does it to you so hard a task appear,
So difficult to love?
Slaves dread the tyrant's lash that makes them smart,
But children feel a love that binds the heart;
To share God's lavish bounty you are fain,
But not to love again!
All the Chorus. O Law divine and full of grace!
Justice and goodness all supreme!
What reason and what joy extreme,
Our love and trust in such a God to place!

ACT II

SCENE I

JEHOSHEBA, SALOME, CHORUS

JEHOSHEBA. Maidens, it is enough; your songs must cease;
'Tis time for us to join the public prayers.
The hour is come to celebrate the feast,
And in our turn before the Lord appear.

SCENE II

JEHOSHEBA, ZACHARIAH, SALOME, CHORUS

Jehosheba. What do I see? My son, what brings thee back?
So pale and breathless, whither dost thou run?
Zachariah. Mother!

Jehosheba. Speak then!
Zachariah. The Temple is profaned!
Jehosheba. What?
Zachariah. And the altar of the Lord forsaken!
Jehosheba. I tremble. Quickly tell thy mother all.
Zachariah. My father, the High Priest, with all due rites
Presented to the Lord, Who feeds mankind,
The first loaves of the harvest we have reap'd:
And then, while offering with blood-stain'd hands
The smoking inwards of the victims slain;
And, standing by his side, Eliakim
Help'd me to serve him, clad in linen stole;
While with the blood of sacrifice the priests
Sprinkled the altar and the worshippers,
There rose a tumult, and the people turn'd,
Sudden astonishment in every eye.
A woman—is to name her blasphemy?
A woman—it was Athaliah's self.
Jehosheba. Great Heav'n!
Zachariah. Within the court reserved for men
This woman enters with uplifted brow,
Yea, and attempts to pass the limit set,
Where none but Levites have a right to come.
The people fly, all scattered in dismay;
My father—ah, what wrath blazed from his eyes!
Moses to Pharaoh seem'd less terrible—
"Go, Queen," my father said, "and leave this place,
Bann'd to thy sex and thine impiety!
Comest to brave the majesty of God?"
And then the Queen, fiercely confronting him,
Seem'd as in act to utter blasphemies;
I know not if the Angel of the Lord
Appear'd before her with a glittering sword,
But straight her tongue seem'd frozen in her mouth,
And all her boldness utterly abash'd;
She could not move her eyes, in terror fix'd
And strange surprise on young Eliakim.
Jehosheba. What! Did he stand there in her very sight?
Zachariah. We both stood gazing on that cruel Queen,

Stricken with equal horror at our hearts;
But soon the priests encompass'd us around,
And forced us to withdraw. I came to thee,
To tell the outrage done; I know no more.

Jehosheba. Ah! she would doubtless tear him from our arms,
E'en at God's altar hunting for her prey.
Perchance, ere now, this child of many tears——
O God, remember David, see and save!

Salome. Who is he, thus to cause your tears to flow?

Zachariah. Why should his life be threaten'd? Can it be?

Salome. What can the boy have done to enrage the Queen?

Zachariah. What fear they from a helpless orphan child?

Jehosheba. She comes! She must not see us; let us go.

SCENE III

ATHALIAH, ABNER, HAGAR, Attendants of ATHALIAH

Hagar. Madam, why stay in such a place as this,
Where every sight offends and wounds thine eye?
Leave to the priests this Temple where they dwell;
Fly from this scene of tumult; and within
Thy palace, lull each troubled sense to rest.

Athaliah. I can not. Thou dost see me vex'd and weak.
Go thou, send word to Mattan that he come
With haste: oh! happy still, if by his aid
I find that peace I seek, and seek in vain! [*She seats herself.*

SCENE IV

ATHALIAH, ABNER, Attendants of ATHALIAH

Abner. Madam, forgive me if I dare defend him.
His zeal should not surprise you. For the God,
Whom we adore, Himself ordain'd it so,
And gave us charge to guard his altar well;
The work of sacrifice to Aaron's sons,
And to the Levites place and task assign'd;
To their descendants strictly he forbade
All fellowship with other deities.
Art thou the wife[1] and mother of our kings,

[1] Racine has "fille" (daughter) by an oversight.

A stranger to our customs on this point?
Dost thou not know our laws? And must to-day——
But Mattan comes: with him I leave thee now.

Athaliah. We need thy presence, Abner. Let it pass,
Jehoiada's presumptuous insolence,
With all that heap of superstitions vain
Which bid you keep your Temple to yourselves:
A subject far more urgent wakes alarm.
I know that from a child, rear'd in the camp,
Abner is generous, knowing how to pay
Alike to God and King the debt he owes.
Remain.

SCENE V

Athaliah, Abner, Mattan, Attendants of Athaliah

Mattan. Great Queen, is this a place for thee?
What trouble stirs, what terror chills thine heart?
What dost thou in the midst of enemies?
Darest thou this unhallowed fane approach?
Hast thou that bitter hatred cast away——

Athaliah. Both of you lend me an attentive ear.
I do not wish now to recall the past,
Nor give account to you for blood I shed.
A sense of duty prompted all my acts,
Nor will I take for judge a hasty crowd;
Whate'er they may presume to spread abroad,
My vindication Heav'n has made its care.
My pow'r, establish'd on renown'd success,
Has magnified my name from sea to sea;
Jerusalem enjoys profoundest peace;
The wandering Arab Jordan sees no more
Ravage his borders with continual raids;
Nor boasts Philistia over Judah now,
And Syria owns me for a sister Queen.
Lastly the traitor, who destroy'd my House,
And e'en to me thought to extend his rage,
Jehu, fierce Jehu, in Samaria quails
Before a mighty rival's rapid strokes,
Whom I incited to attack my foe;

And thus th' assassin leaves me mistress here,
To reap the fruits of policy in peace.
But for some days a gnawing care has come,
To check the flood of my prosperity.
A dream (why should a dream disquiet me?)
Preys on my heart, and keeps it ill at ease;
I try to banish it; it haunts me still.
'Twas deepest night, when horror falls on man,
My mother Jezebel before me stood,
Richly attired as on the day she died,
Her pride undaunted by misfortune's touch.
That borrow'd brightness still her features wore,
Which she would paint upon her wither'd face,
To hide the ravages of ruthless age:
"Tremble," she said, "child worthy of myself;
O'er thee too triumphs Judah's cruel god,
And thou must fall into his dreadful hands,
Whereat I grieve." With these alarming words,
Her spectre o'er my bed appear'd to bend;
I stretch'd my hands to clasp her; but I found
Only a hideous mass of flesh and bones,
Horribly bruised and mangled, dragg'd through mire,
Bleeding and torn, whose limbs the dogs of prey
Were growling over with devouring greed.

Abner. Great God!

Athaliah. While thus disturb'd, before me rose
The vision of a boy in shining robe,
Such as the Hebrew priests are wont to wear.
My drooping spirits at his sight revived:
But while my troubled eyes, to peace restored,
Admired his noble air and modest grace,
I felt the sudden stroke of murderous steel
Plunged deeply by the traitor in my breast.
Perhaps to you this dream, so strangely mix'd,
May seem a work of chance, and I myself,
For long ashamed to let my fears prevail,
Referr'd it to a melancholy mood;
But while its memory linger'd in my soul,
Twice in my sleep I saw that form again,

Twice the same child before my eyes appear'd,
Always about to stab me to the heart.
Worn out at last by horror's close pursuit,
I went to claim Baal's protecting care,
And, kneeling at his altars, find repose.
How strangely fear may sway our mortal minds!
And instinct seem'd to drive me to these courts,
To pacify the God whom Jews adore;
I thought that offerings might appease his wrath,
That this their god might grow more merciful.
Baal's High Priest, my feebleness forgive!
I enter'd; and the sacrifice was stay'd,
The people fled, Jehoiada in wrath
Advanced to meet me. As he spake, I saw
With terror and surprise that self-same boy
Who haunts me in my dreams. I saw him there;
His mien the same, the same his linen stole,
His gait, his eyes, each feature of his face;
It was himself; beside th' High Priest he walk'd,
Till quickly they removed him from my sight.
That is the trouble which detains me here,
And thereon would I fain consult you both.
Mattan, what means this omen marvellous?

Mattan. Coincidence so strange fills me with dread.

Athaliah. But, Abner, hast thou seen this fatal child?
Who is he? What his family, his tribe?

Abner. Two children at the altar lend their aid,
One is the High Priest's son, the other is
To me unknown.

Mattan. Why hesitate to act?
Your Majesty must needs secure them both.
'Tis known how I regard Jehoiada,
Seeking no vengeance for my private wrongs,
In all my warnings studying to be fair;
But, after all, were this indeed his son,
Would he one moment let the guilty live?

Abner. Of what crime can a child be capable?

Mattan. Heav'n show'd him with a dagger in his hand;
And Heav'n is just and wise, nor works in vain.

What more dost want?

Abner. But, trusting to a dream
Say, wouldst thou have us bathe in infant blood?
Ye know not yet his father nor his name.

Mattan. Enough for fear! I have considered all.
If from illustrious parentage he springs,
His ruin should be hasten'd by his rank;
If Fate has placed him in a lot obscure,
What matters it if worthless blood be spilt?
Must kings keep pace when justice lags behind?
On promptitude their safety oft depends;
No irksome scruples need their freedom check;
To be suspected is all one with guilt.

Abner. Mattan! Is this the language of a priest?
Nursed in the lap of war, in carnage reared,
Stern agent of the vengeful wrath of Kings,
'Tis I who now must urge misfortune's plea!
And thou, who owest him a father's love,
A minister of peace in times of wrath,
Cloaking resentment with pretended zeal
Dost chafe that blood should flow so tardily!
Thou badest me, Madam, speak my honest thought:
What, then, is this that moves thy fear so much?
A dream, a feeble child, whom, it may be,
Too readily thy fancy recognised.

Athaliah. Abner, I will admit I may be wrong,
Heeding too much, perchance, an idle dream.
More closely then must I behold that child,
And at my leisure scan his features well.
Let both the boys be brought before me now.

Abner. I fear——

Athaliah. What! Can they fail to grant me this?
What reason could they have to say me no?
'Twould rouse suspicion. Bid Jehosheba,
Or else her husband, bring the children here;
I can at pleasure use a monarch's tone.
Abner, I tell thee candidly, your priests
Have cause to bless my kindness hitherto;
I know how far they freely have discuss'd

My conduct, and abused my sovereign power;
And yet they live, and yet their temple stands.
But soon, I feel, the limit may be pass'd,
Jehoiada must curb his savage zeal,
And not provoke my wrath a second time.
Go.

SCENE VI

Athaliah, Mattan, Attendants of Athaliah

Mattan. I may now at last in freedom speak,
And clearly set the truth before thine eyes.
A growing monster in this temple lurks;
A tempest threatens, wait not till it breaks.
Ere daylight Abner with th' High Priest conferr'd;
Thou knowest well his love for David's line.
What if Jehoiada should in their ranks
Foist this young child with whom Heav'n threatens thee,
His son or not——

Athaliah. Thou hast unseal'd mine eyes,
And Heaven's warning vision grows distinct.
But I would fain be free from every doubt:
Children will readily betray their thoughts,
One word will oft disclose some deep design.
Let me, dear Mattan, see him, question him.
Go thou, meanwhile, and secret orders give
That all my Tyrians quickly arm themselves.

SCENE VII

Joash, Athaliah, Jehosheba, Zachariah, Abner, Salome, Two Levites, Chorus, Attendants of Athaliah

Jehosheba. [*To the* Two Levites.] Keep constant watch, ye servants of the Lord,
Over these children, precious and beloved.

Abner. [*To* Jehosheba.] Take courage, Princess; they shall be my charge.

Athaliah. Heav'ns! the more closely I examine him——
'Tis he! And horror seizes me again.
[*Pointing to* Joash.] Wife of Jehoiada, is this thy son?

Jehosheba. He, Madam?
Athaliah. He.
Jehosheba. His mother? No, not I.
There is my son. [*Pointing to* ZACHARIAH.
Athaliah. [*To* JOASH.] Who is thy father, child?
Answer, thyself.
Jehosheba. Heav'n till this very day——
Athaliah. Why in such haste to answer for the boy?
It is for him to speak.
Jehosheba. From one so young
What revelation canst thou hope to gain?
Athaliah. The young are innocent; and simple truth
Their honest frankness knows not to disguise:
Let him explain all that concerns himself.
Jehosheba. [*Aside.*] Great God, put now Thy wisdom in his mouth!
Athaliah. What is thy name?
Joash. My name's Eliakim.
Athaliah. Thy father?
Joash. Fatherless, they say, I am,
Cast since my birth upon the arms of God;
I never knew my parents, who they were.
Athaliah. Hast thou no parents?
Joash. They abandon'd me.
Athaliah. How? and how long ago?
Joash. When I was born.
Athaliah. Where is thy home? This can at least be told.
Joash. This Temple is my home; none else I know.
Athaliah. Where wast thou found? Hast thou been told of that?
Joash. 'Midst cruel wolves, ready to eat me up.
Athaliah. Who placed thee in this Temple?
Joash. One unknown,
She gave no name, nor was she seen again.
Athaliah. Whose guardian hands preserved thine infant years?
Joash. When did God e'er neglect His children's needs?
The feather'd nestlings He provides with food,
And o'er all nature spreads His bounty wide.

Daily I pray; and with a Father's care
He feeds me from the sacred offerings.

Athaliah. New wonder comes to trouble and perplex!
The sweetness of his voice, his infant grace
Unconsciously make enmity give way
To—can it be compassion that I feel!

Abner. Madam, is this thy dreaded enemy?
'Tis evident thy dreams have played thee false;
Unless thy pity, which now seems to vex,
Should be the fatal blow that terrified.

Athaliah. Why are ye leaving? [*To* JOASH *and* JEHOSHEBA.

Jehosheba. Thou hast heard his tale:
His presence longer might be troublesome.

Athaliah. [*To* JOASH.] Nay, child, come back. What dost thou all the day?

Joash. I worship God, and hear His Law explain'd;
His holy volume I am taught to read,
And now to write it has my hand begun.

Athaliah. What says that Law?

Joash. That God requires our love,
Avenges, soon or late, His Name blasphemed,
Is the protector of the fatherless,
Resists the proud, the murderer punishes.

Athaliah. I understand. But all within these walls,
How are they occupied?

Joash. In praising God.

Athaliah. Does God claim constant service here and prayer?

Joash. All else is banish'd from His holy courts.

Athaliah. What pleasures hast thou?

Joash. Where God's altar stands,
I sometimes help th' High Priest to offer salt
Or incense, hear His lofty praises sung,
And see His stately ritual perform'd.

Athaliah. What! Hast thou pastime none more sweet than that?
Sad lot for one so young; but come with me,
And see my palace and my splendour there.

Joash. God's goodness then would from my memory fade.

Athaliah. I would not force thee to forget Him, child.
Joash. Thou dost not pray to Him.
Athaliah. But thou shalt pray.
Joash. There I should hear another's name invoked.
Athaliah. I serve my god: and thou shalt worship thine.
There are two powerful gods.
Joash. Thou must fear mine;
He only is the Lord, and thine is naught.
Athaliah. Pleasures untold will I provide for thee.
Joash. The happiness of sinners melts away.
Athaliah. Of sinners, who are they?
Jehosheba. Madam, excuse
A child——
Athaliah. I like to see how ye have taught him;
And thou hast pleased me well, Eliakim,
Being, and that past doubt, no common child.
See thou, I am a queen, and have no heir;
Forsake this humble service, doff this garb,
And I will let thee share in all my wealth;
Make trial of my promise from this day;
Beside me at my table, everywhere,
Thou shalt receive the treatment of a son.
Joash. A son!
Athaliah. Yes, speak.
Joash. And such a Father leave
For——
Athaliah. Well, what?
Joash. Such a mother as thyself!
Athaliah. [*To* JEHOSHEBA.] His memory is good; in all he says
I recognise the lessons ye have given.
Yes, this is how, corrupting guileless youth,
Ye both improve the freedom ye enjoy,
Inciting them to hatred and wild rage,
Until they shudder but to hear my name.
Jehosheba. Can our misfortunes be conceal'd from them?
All the world knows them; are they not thy boast?
Athaliah. Yea; with just wrath, that I am proud to own,
My parents on my offspring I avenged.

Could I see sire[1] and brother massacred,
My mother from the palace roof cast down,
And the same day beheaded all at once
(Oh, horror!) fourscore[2] princes of the blood;
And all to avenge a pack of prophets slain,
Whose dangerous frenzies Jezebel had curb'd.
Have queens no heart, daughters no filial love,
That I should act the coward and the slave,
Too pitiful to cope with savages,
By rendering death for death, and blow for blow?
David's posterity from me received
Treatment no worse than had my father's sons!
Where should I be to-day, had I not quell'd
All weakness and a mother's tenderness,
Had not this hand of mine like water shed
My own heart's blood, and boldly check'd your plots?
Your god has vow'd implacable revenge;
Snapt is the link between thine house and mine,
David and all his offspring I abhor,
Though born of my own blood I own them not.

Jehosheba. Thy plans have prospered. Let God see, and judge!

Athaliah. Your god, forsooth, your only refuge left,
What will become of his predictions now?
Let him present you with that promised King,
That Son of David, waited for so long——
We meet again. Farewell. I go content:
I wished to see, and I have seen.

Abner. [*To* Jehosheba.] The trust
I undertook to keep, I thus resign.

SCENE VIII

Joash, Jehosheba, Zachariah, Salome, Jehoiada, Abner, Levites, Chorus

Jehosheba. [*To* Jehoiada.] My lord, didst hear the Queen's presumptuous words?

[1] Ahab was in reality mortally wounded at the battle of Ramoth Gilead. (1 Kings, xxii, 34.)

[2] Seventy, according to 2 Kings, x, 7.

Jehoiada. I heard them all, and felt for thee the while.
These Levites were with me ready to aid
Or perish with you, such was our resolve.
[*To* JOASH, *embracing him.*] May God watch o'er thee, child, whose courage bore,
Just now, such noble witness to His Name!
Thy service, Abner, has been well discharged:
I shall expect thee at the appointed hour.
I must return, this impious murderess
Has stain'd my vision, and disturb'd my prayers;
The very pavement that her feet have trod
My hands shall sprinkle o'er with cleansing blood.

SCENE IX

CHORUS

One of the Maidens forming the Chorus. What star has burst upon our eyes?
What shall this wondrous child become one day?
Vain pomp and show he dares despise,
Nor lets those charms, where danger lies,
Lead his young feet from God astray.
Another Voice. While all to Baal's altar flock,
And for the Queen their faith disown,
A child proclaims that Israel's Rock
Is the eternal God alone,
And though this Jezebel may mock,
Elijah's spirit he has shown.
Another Voice. Who will the secret of thy birth explain?
Dear child, some holy prophet lives in thee again!
Another Voice. Thus grew the gentle Samuel of yore,
Beneath the shadow of God's dwelling-place;
And he became the hope of Israel's race,
To guide and comfort; this be thou and more!
Another Voice. Oh! blest beyond compare,
The child who knows His love,
Who early hears His voice, and keeps with care
The teaching he receives from God above!
Far severed from the world, from birth endued

With all the gifts of Heaven,
No evil influence has imbued
His innocence with sin's infectious leaven.
All the Chorus. A happy youth he spends,
Whom the Lord teaches, whom the Lord defends!
The same Voice. [*Alone.*] As in sequester'd vale,
Where a clear streamlet flows,
Shelter'd from every stormy gale
Darling of Nature, some young lily grows.
Far severed from the world, from birth endued
With all the gifts of Heaven,
No evil influence has imbued
His innocence with sin's infectious leaven.
All the Chorus. Blest more than tongue can tell,
The child whom God inclines to keep His statutes well!
One Voice. [*Alone.*] With faltering steps doth dawning Virtue tread
'Mid countless perils that beset the way;
What hindrances and snares for him are spread
Who seeks Thee, Lord, and fears from innocence to stray!
Where can Thy saints a shelter find,
With foes in front and foes behind?
Sinners fill all the earth, my God, look where we may.
Another Voice. Palace and City, David loved so well,
O Mount, where God Himself long deigned to dwell,
What has thy crime that draws down vengeance been?
What sayest thou, dear Zion, to behold,
Seated where sat thy kings from days of old,
An impious foreign Queen?
All the Chorus. What sayest thou, dear Zion, to behold
An impious foreign Queen,
Seated where sat thy kings from days of old?
The same Voice continues. Where once the Lord was bless'd,
Father and God confess'd,
Where David's holy strains so sweet had been,
What sayest thou, dear Zion, to behold
Cursing the Name thy kings adored of old,
Praising her own false gods, an impious foreign Queen?

One Voice. [*Alone.*] How often, Lord, how often yet shall we
Against Thee rising up the wicked see?
They with unhallow'd feet Thy courts defile,
And all who worship Thee as fools revile.
How often, Lord, how often yet shall we
Against Thee rising up the wicked see?
Another Voice. Ah, what avails, say they, this virtue stern,
That from sweet Pleasure's voice
Morosely bids you turn?
Your God does naught for you to justify your choice.
Another Voice. Where Pleasure leads, laughter and song be ours.
Thus speak those impious throngs:
Care for the future to dull fools belongs,
To passion give the reins, cull the sweet flow'rs;
Too quickly at the best years take their flight,
Who knows if we shall see to-morrow's light?
Let us to-day enjoy life's fragrant bowers!
All the Chorus. Let tears and terrors, Lord, their portion be,
These outcast wretches, who shall never see
Thy holy city with eternal glory crown'd;
Be ours, on whom thy beams immortal shine,
To hymn Thy gifts divine,
Be ours with voice of praise Thy majesty to sound!
One Voice. [*Alone.*] Of all their false delights what will remain
To souls absorb'd therein? As visions vain,
That vanish with the dawning day,
When they awaken with dismay!
While for the poor Thy table shall be spread,
Deep shall they drain the cup of judgment dread
That Thou shalt offer to all such as they,
When Mercy's hour has fled.
All the Chorus. Oh, wakening of dismay
From dream too quickly sped,
From error's dangerous sway!

ACT III

SCENE I

Mattan, Nabal, Chorus

MATTAN. Go, damsels: let Jehosheba be told
That Mattan would in private speak with her.
One of the Maidens of the Chorus. Mattan! May
God in Heaven confound his plots!
Nabal. They all disperse in flight without reply!
Mattan. Let us draw near.

SCENE II

Zachariah, Mattan, Nabal

Zachariah. Rash man, where wouldst thou go?
Beware thou do not step beyond this spot;
This is a dwelling sacred to the priests;
Our laws forbid all common entrance here.
Whom seekest thou? This solemn day, my sire,
Shuns contact with impure idolatry,
And prostrate now before Jehovah's shrine,
My mother will not have her prayer disturb'd.
Mattan. My son, be not distress'd, we will wait here.
To your illustrious mother I would speak;
I come charged with a message from the Queen.

SCENE III

Mattan, Nabal

Nabal. Their very children ape their insolence!
But what means Athaliah now to do?
Whence springs this indecision in her plans?
This morn, rebuff'd by that presumptuous priest,
When dreams had warned of danger from a child,
Her mind was to destroy Jehoiada,
And in this Temple Baal's altar place,
With thee to serve him; in thy joy I shared,

Hoping to gain my part in the rich spoil.
What made her change her fickle purpose thus?
Mattan. She has not been herself these two days past.
No more is she the bold, clear-sighted Queen,
With spirit raised above her timid sex,
Whose rapid action overwhelm'd her foes,
Who knew the value of an instant lost:
Fear and remorse disturb that lofty soul;
She wavers, falters, all the woman now.
Not long ago I fill'd with bitter wrath
Her heart already moved by threats from Heaven,
And she, intrusting vengeance to my care,
Bade me assemble all her guard in haste;
But whether that young child, before her brought,
(A poor, unhappy foundling, as they say),
Assuaged the terror that her dream had caused,
Or seeing in the boy some secret charm,
I find her shaken in her dire resolve,
Postponing vengeance to some future day;
And fatal strife in all her counsels reigns.
"I have inquired," said I, "about that child,
And hear strange boasts of royal ancestry;
How to the malcontents, from time to time,
The High Priest shows him, bids the Jews expect
In him a second Moses, and supports
His speech with lying oracles." These words
Made her brow flush. Swiftly the falsehood work'd.
"Is it for me," she said, "to pine in doubt?
Let us be rid of this perplexity.
Convey my sentence to Jehosheba:
Soon shall the fire be kindled, and the sword
Deal slaughter, soon their Temple shall be razed,
Unless, as hostage for their loyalty,
They yield this child to me."
Nabal. For one unknown,
Whom chance, may be, has thrown into their arms,
Will they behold their Temple buried low——
Mattan. Ah! but no mortals have such pride as they.
Rather than to my hands resign a child,

Whom to his God Jehoiada has vow'd,
He will endure to die the worst of deaths.
Besides, they manifestly love this child,
And, if I construe right the Queen's account,
Jehoiada knows more than he will say
Touching his birth. Refusal I foresee,
In any case, with fatal consequence,
The rest be my concern; with fire and sword
To wipe this odious Temple from my eyes
Is my last hope.

Nabal. What prompts so fierce a hate?
Is it consuming zeal for Baal's cause?
Myself a child of Ishmael, as thou knowest,
I worship neither thine nor Israel's god.

Mattan. Dost think, my friend, that any senseless zeal
For a dumb idol could my judgment blind——
A perishable log, that worms destroy
In spite of all my efforts, day by day?
From birth devoted to the God, who here
Is worshipp'd, Mattan still might be his priest,
If but the love of grandeur, thirst for pow'r,
Could be consistent with his stringent yoke.
Nabal, I hardly need to thee recall
The quarrel 'tween Jehoiada and me,
When against him I dared the censer claim;
They made some stir, my struggle, tears, despair.
Vanquish'd, I enter'd on a new career,
And bound me, soul and body, to the Court.
By slow degrees I gain'd the ear of kings,
And soon my voice was deem'd oracular.
Their hearts I studied, flatter'd each caprice,
And sprinkled flow'rs for them on danger's brink.
Nothing to me was sacred that they craved.
Measure and weight I alter'd as they will'd.
As often as Jehoiada's blunt speech
Boldly offended their fastidious ears,
So often I had pow'r and skill to charm;
Concealing from their eyes unpleasant truths,
Gilding their savage passion with fair tints,

And lavish more than all of human blood.
At length was raised by Athaliah's hands
A temple to the god she introduced.
Jerusalem with tears the outrage saw;
The sons of Levi, stricken with alarm,
Appeal'd to Heaven with indignant cries.
I only, leading cowards in my train,
Deserter from their Law, that act approved,
And Baal's priesthood thereby merited.
Thus made my rival's formidable foe,
I donn'd the mitre; march'd along, his peer.
Still, I confess, e'en at my glory's height,
Harass'd by memories of the God I left,
Some fear remain'd to discompose my soul,
And this it is that fans and feeds my rage:
Happy if, wreaking vengeance on His shrine,
I may reduce His wrath to impotence,
And amidst ruin, desolation, death,
Lose my remorse in plenitude of crime!
Here comes Jehosheba.

SCENE IV

JEHOSHEBA, MATTAN, NABAL

Mattan. Sent by the Queen
To bring back peace, and hatred drive away,
Be not surprised that I should thee accost;
Princess, whose gentle spirit comes from Heaven,
A rumour, which of falsehood I suspect,
Supports the warning that a dream had given,
Accusing the High Priest of dangerous plots,
And raising in the Queen a storm of ire.
I wish not here to vaunt my services,
Knowing Jehoiada to me unjust;
But good for evil is a due return.
In short, I come commission'd to speak peace.
Live, keep your feasts without a shade of fear.
For your obedience she but asks a pledge——
(My efforts to dissuade her have been vain),
This orphan, whom she says that she has seen.

Jehosheba. Eliakim?
Mattan. Whereat I feel some shame
On her account, making an idle dream
Of too much moment. But unless ye give
This child to me forthwith, her mortal foes
Ye prove yourselves. Your answer she awaits,
Impatient.
Jehosheba. These, then, are her words of peace!
Mattan. And can ye for one moment hesitate
By slight concession such a boon to gain?
Jehosheba. Strange would it be, if Mattan, free of guile,
Could trample down the injustice of his heart,
And, after being of all ill contriver,
Could be the author of some shade of good!
Mattan. What is your grievance? Has the Queen, in rage,
Sent to tear Zachariah from your arms?
He is your son; the other why so dear?
This fondness, in my turn, surprises me.
What treasure find ye there of priceless worth?
Has Heaven in him sent a deliverer?
Bethink you, your refusal may confirm
A secret rumour that begins to grow.
Jehosheba. What rumour?
Mattan. That illustrious is his birth,
And that thy husband hatches some grand part
For him to play.
Jehosheba. And Mattan, by this tale
That soothes his rage——
Mattan. Princess, it is for thee
To disabuse my mind. I know thou wouldst,
As falsehood's ruthless foe, resign thy life
Sooner than sully thy sincerity
By the least word that is opposed to truth.
Hast thou no clew then to this mystery?
Is his birth buried in the deepest night?
Knowest thou not thyself from whom he sprang?
Whose hands they were that gave him to thy spouse?
I pause for answer; ready to believe thee.
Give glory, Princess, to the God thou servest.

Jehosheba. Base man, it suits thee well to dare to name
A God whom thou hast taught men to blaspheme!
Can such a wretch as thou invoke His truth,
Thou on the seat of foul corruption throned,
Where falsehood reigns and spreads its poison round,
Whose lip with treachery and imposture teems!

SCENE V

JEHOIADA, JEHOSHEBA, MATTAN, NABAL

Jehoiada. Where am I? Is this Baal's priest I see?
Does David's daughter with a traitor talk,
And turn a listening ear? Dost thou not fear
That 'neath his feet should gape a gulf profound,
And flames forth issuing straight scorch and consume thee,
Or these walls crush thee falling upon him?
What would he? Why this bold effrontery?
Why comes God's foe to taint this holy air?

Mattan. To rail is but to be Jehoiada!
Yet might he well, in reverence for the Queen,
Show greater prudence, and forbear to insult
The chosen envoy of her high command.

Jehoiada. With what ill-omened tidings art thou charged?
What dreadful mission brings such messenger?

Mattan. Jehosheba has heard the royal will.

Jehoiada. Then get thee from my presence, impious wretch!
Go, and fill up the measure of thy crimes.
Soon will God make thee join the perjured crew
Of Dathan, Doeg, and Ahithophel;
The dogs He fed with fallen Jezebel,
Waiting to glut their fury upon thee,
Besiege thy door, all howling for their prey!

Mattan. [*In confusion.*] Ere the day close—which of us is to be——
'Twill soon be seen—but, Nabal, let us go.

Nabal. Where dost thou stray? Is then thy sense distraught?
There lies thy way.

SCENE VI

Jehoiada, Jehosheba

Jehosheba. The storm's about to burst:
The angry Queen demands Eliakim.
Already they begin to penetrate
The mystery of his birth and thy designs.
Mattan could all but tell his father's name.

Jehoiada. Who to the traitor can have given a clew?
Thine agitation may have told too much.

Jehosheba. I have done all I could to master it:
And yet, believe me, danger presses close.
Let us reserve this child for happier times.
While still our wicked foes deliberate,
Ere they come round to tear him from our arms,
Let me, my lord, hide him a second time:
The gates stand open, and the way is free.
To wildest deserts must I carry him?
Ready am I. I know a secret path,
By which, without a chance of being seen,
Crossing the Kedron's torrent with the lad,
The wilderness I'll gain, where wept of old
David, in flight from his rebellious son,
And seeking safety from pursuit like us.
I shall fear less for him lions and bears——
But why reject Jehu's good offices?
Is not the counsel sound that I unfold?
Let us in Jehu's charge this treasure place,
And one may reach his realm this very day;
The way that leads to him is short. Nor starts
The heart of Jehu from compassion's touch;
The name of David he in honour holds.
Ah! lives there king so cruel and so hard,
Unless his mother were a Jezebel,
Who would not pity such a suppliant's cry?
Must not all monarchs make his cause their own?

Jehoiada. What timid counsels, and how boldly urged!
Canst thou then place thy hopes in Jehu's aid?

Jehosheba. Does God forbid all forethought and all care?

Condemns He not too blind a confidence?
Making mankind fulfil His holy ends,
Is it not God Himself arms Jehu's hands?

Jehoiada. Jehu, whom God in His deep wisdom chose,
Jehu, on whom I see thy hopes are based,
Ungratefully forgets His benefits;
Ahab's fierce daughter he has left in peace,
And follows the vile steps of Israel's kings,
Keeps up the shrines of Egypt's bestial god,
And on high places rashly dares to burn
An incense that the Lord our God abhors.
Jehu too surely lacks the upright heart,
And clean hands, needed to promote His cause.
No, we must cling to God, and Him alone.
We must not hide but plainly show the boy,
With royal diadem around his brow;
I e'en intend to advance the appointed hour,
Ere Mattan can mature his counterplot.

SCENE VII

JEHOIADA, JEHOSHEBA, AZARIAH (*followed by the* CHORUS, *and a number of* LEVITES)

Jehoiada. Well, Azariah, is the Temple closed?

Azariah. I have seen all the gates securely barr'd.

Jehoiada. Remain there none but thou and thine allies?

Azariah. Twice have I gone all round the sacred courts,
All have fled hence, nor think they of return,
Scatter'd by panic like a flock of sheep;
The holy tribe are left sole worshippers.
Never, since they escaped from Pharaoh's power,
Has such dismay as this the people seized.

Jehoiada. Faint-hearted people, born for slavery,
Bold only against God! Let us pursue
The work we have in hand. But who still keeps
These children in our midst?

One of the Maidens forming the Chorus. Could we, my lord,
Sever ourselves from you? No strangers we
Here, in God's House, where ranged beside thee stand

Our fathers and our brothers.

Another Maiden. If to avenge
The shame of Israel we lack Jael's power,
Who pierced the temples of God's impious foe,
We may at least for Him our lives lay down;
When for His threaten'd shrine your arms shall fight,
At least our tears may to His throne appeal.

Jehoiada. Lo, what avengers of Thy holy cause,
O Wisdom infinite—these priests and babes!
But, Thou supporting, who can make them fall?
Thou canst, at will, recall us from our graves,
Canst wound and heal, canst kill and make alive.
They put no trust in merits of their own,
But in Thy Name, for them so oft invoked,
Thy promise to the holiest of their kings,
This Temple where Thou dost vouchsafe to dwell,
Destined to last long as the sun in heaven.
Why throbs my heart with holy ecstasy?
Is it God's Spirit thus takes hold of me,
Glows in my breast, speaks, and unseals mine eyes?
Before me spread dim distant ages rise.
Ye Levites, let your melodies conspire
To fan the flame of inspiration's fire.

The Chorus. [*Singing to the accompaniment of musical instruments.*] Lord, be Thy voice to our dull ears conveyed,
Thy holy message to our hearts be borne,
As to the tender blade
Comes, in the spring, the freshness of the morn!

Jehoiada. Ye heavens hear my voice; thou earth give ear:
That the Lord sleeps, no more let Israel fear:
The Lord awakes! Ye sinners, disappear!

[*The music begins again, and* Jehoiada *immediately resumes.*
How has pure gold changed into worthless lead?
What Pontiff's blood is at the altar shed?
Weep, Salem; faithless city, weep in vain!
Thy murderous hands have God's own prophets slain:
Therefore His love for thee hath banish'd been,
Thine incense is to Him a smoke unclean.
Oh, whither are these tender captives led?

The Lord the queen of cities hath discrown'd,
Cast off her kings, her priests in fetters bound;
Within her streets no festal throngs are found:
The Temple falls! high leap the flames with cedar fed!
Jerusalem, sad spectacle of woe,
How in one day thy beauty disappears!
Would that mine eyes might be a fount of tears,
To weep thine overthrow!
Azariah. Oh, holy shrine!
Jehosheba. Oh, David!
The Chorus. Lord, restore
Favour to Thine own Zion, as of yore!

[*The music begins again, and* JEHOIADA, *a moment afterward, breaks in upon it.*

Jehoiada. What new Jerusalem is this draws nigh,
With beams of light that from the desert shine?
She bears upon her brow a mark divine:
Ye peoples, raise your joyous song on high!
Zion is born anew, far fairer to the eye.
From every side a gathering crowd I view,
Children that thine own bosom never knew;
Jerusalem, arise, lift up thine head!
Thy glory fills with wonder all these kings,
Each monarch of the earth his homage brings,
Her mightiest kiss the dust where thou dost tread;
All press to hail the light around thee shed.
Blessed be he whose soul with ardour glows
To see fair Zion rise!
Drop down your dews, ye skies,
And let the earth her Saviour now disclose!
Jehosheba. Ah, whence may we accept a gift so rare,
If those, from whom that Saviour is to spring——
Jehoiada. Prepare, Jehosheba, the royal crown,
Which David wore upon his sacred brow:
[*To the* LEVITES.] And ye, to arm yourselves, come, follow me
Where are kept hidden, far from eyes profane,
That dread array of lances, and of swords,
Which once were drench'd with proud Philistia's blood,
And conquering David, full of years and fame,

Devoted to the Lord who shelter'd him.
Can we employ them for a nobler use?
Come; and I will myself distribute them.

SCENE VIII

Salome, Chorus

Salome. What fearful scenes, my sisters, must we see!
These arms, great God, strange sacrifice portend:
What incense, what first fruits do they intend
To offer on Thine altar unto Thee?

One of the Maidens of the Chorus. What sight is this to meet our timid eyes!
Who would have thought that we should e'er behold
Forests of spears arise,
And swords flash forth, where Peace has dwelt from days of old?

Another. How comes it that, when danger is at hand,
Our city shows such dull indifference?
How comes it, sisters, that for our defence
E'en valiant Abner leads no succouring band?

Salome. Ah! In a Court that owns no other laws
Than force and violence,
Who would embrace the inauspicious cause
Of youthful innocence?
Baseness and blind submission there provide
High honours that to virtue are denied.

Another Maiden. When danger and disorder grimly frown,
For whom thus bring they forth the consecrated crown?

Salome. The Lord hath deign'd to speak,
But vainly do we seek
His prophet's utterance to comprehend.
Arms He destructions upon us to wreak?
Or arms He to defend?

All the Chorus sings. Promise and threat! What may this mystery be?
What evil and what good in turn foretold!
How with such anger can such love agree?
Who shall the clew unfold?

One Voice. [*Alone.*] Zion shall perish in devouring flame,
All her beauty shall be overthrown.
Another Voice. Zion's defence is in Jehovah's Name,
His deathless word her sure foundation stone.
The First Voice. I see her glory sink before mine eyes!
The Second Voice. The spreading radiance of her light I see!
The First Voice. Plunged in the deepest gulf of misery!
The Second Voice. Zion uplifts her forehead to the skies!
The First Voice. What ruin!
The Second Voice. Endless life to her belongs!
The First Voice. What cries of pain!
The Second Voice. Hark to victorious songs!
A Third Voice. Cease these perplexing thoughts to trace;
God will the mystery solve, we know not how.
All Three Voices. Before His wrath in reverence let us bow,
And let our hopes His love embrace.
Another Voice. The heart whose love is Thine,
My God, who can disturb its peace?
Thy will supreme its guiding star doth shine,
With beams that never cease:
What happiness in earth or heaven can be
Like the peace that keeps in sweet tranquility,
The heart that loveth Thee?

ACT IV

SCENE I

JOASH, JEHOSHEBA, ZACHARIAH, SALOME, *a* LEVITE, *the* CHORUS

SALOME. With step majestic by my mother's side,
Comes with my brother young Eliakim.
Sisters, what bear they wrapp'd within these veils?
What means that sword carried in front of them?
Jehosheba. [*To* ZACHARIAH.] My son, with reverence on this table place
The awful volume of our holy Law.

And thou, my sweet Eliakim, lay here,
Close to the book of God, this diadem.
Levite, it is Jehoiada's command,
Let David's sword be placed beside his crown.

Joash. Dear Princess, tell me, what new sight is this?
The sacred scroll, the sword, the diadem?
Since God within His Temple shelter'd me,
No preparation have I seen like this.

Jehosheba. Soon will thy wondering doubts be cleared, my son.

Joash. Try not that diadem upon my brow!
'Tis profanation of the glorious dead!
The King who wore it claims more reverence.
A poor unhappy child, left for the bears——

Jehosheba. [*Trying the crown upon him.*] Let be, my son: thus has it been enjoin'd.

Joash. But do I hear thee sob? Princess, thy cheeks
Are wet with tears! What pity touches thee?
Am I, as Jephthah's daughter was of old,
To be presented for a sacrifice,
And, by my death, appease the wrath of God?
A son has naught his Father may not claim.
Ah me!

Jehosheba. Lo, here is one who will declare God's will
To thee, alone: fear not. Come, let us go.

SCENE II

JOASH, JEHOIADA

Joash. Father! [*Running into the High Priest's arms.*

Jehoiada. My son!

Joash. What preparation's here?

Jehoiada. 'Tis right, my son, that thou shouldst know the truth,
And, sooner than all others, learn God's will,
His purpose for His people and for thee.
Arm thee with courage, and renew thy faith.
The time is come to prove that fervent zeal
Which I have cherish'd in thy heart with care,

And to discharge the debt due to thy God.
Art thou resolv'd to show a generous mind?
Joash. Yea, ready if He will to give my life.
Jehoiada. Oft hast thou heard the story of our kings;
Dost bear in mind, my son, how strict the laws
A king must follow, worthy of the crown?
Joash. Wise kings, for thus hath God Himself declared,
Will not rely on riches and on gold,
But fear the Lord their God, regarding still
His precepts, and His judgments, and His laws,
Nor yoke oppressive on their brethren lay.
Jehoiada. But wert thou bound to copy one such king,
Which wouldst thou choose to imitate, my son?
Joash. There seems to me none worthy to compare
With faithful David, full of love divine.
Jehoiada. Thou wouldst not follow then the erring steps
Of faithless Joram and his impious son?
Joash. Father!
Jehoiada. Proceed, and tell me all thy mind.
Joash. Whoso resembles them perish as they!
[JEHOIADA *prostrates himself at his feet.*] Father, why dost thou kneel before my face?
Jehoiada. I pay thee the respect I owe my King.
Joash, prove worthy of thine ancestor,
Of David.
Joash. Am I Joash?
Jehoiada. Thou shalt know
How graciously God foil'd the savage plot
Of Athaliah, saving thee from death,
Already with the dagger in thy breast.
Nor from her fury art thou yet escaped:
With the same eagerness that would erewhile
Have slain in thee her son's posterity,
Her cruelty is bent on thy destruction,
Nor does a change of name elude pursuit.
But 'neath thy standard I have gather'd here,
Prompt to avenge thee, an obedient band.
Enter, brave captain of the holy seed,
Honour'd by sacred service in your turns.

SCENE III

Jehoiada, Joash, Azariah, Ishmael, *and the three other* Chiefs *of the* Levites

Jehoiada. [*Continues.*] Lo there, the King's avengers 'gainst
his foes!
And there, ye priests, behold your promised King!
Azariah. Why, 'tis Eliakim!
Ishmael. Is that sweet child——
Jehoiada. The rightful heir of Judah's kings, the last
Of hapless Ahaziah's lineage,
Call'd by the name of Joash, as ye know.
All Judah, like yourselves, bewail'd the fate
Of that fair tender flow'r so soon cut down,
Believing him with all his brethren slain.
With them he met the traitor's cruel knife:
But Heaven turn'd aside the mortal stroke,
Kept in his heart the smouldering spark of life,
And let my wife, eluding watchful eyes,
Convey him in her bosom, bathed in blood,
And hide him in the Temple with his nurse,
I being sole accomplice of her theft.
Joash. Ah, how, my father, can I e'er repay
The kindness and the love so freely given?
Jehoiada. The time will come to prove that gratitude.
Look then upon your King, your only hope!
My care has been to keep him for this hour;
Servants of God, 'tis yours that care to crown.
The child of Jezebel, the murderess queen,
Inform'd that Joash lives, will soon be here,
Opening for him the tomb a second time,
His death determined, though himself unknown.
Priests, 'tis for you her fury to forestall,
And Judah's shameful slavery to end;
Avenge your princes slain, your Law restore,
Make Benjamin and Judah own their King.
The enterprise, no doubt, is dangerous,
Attacking a proud queen upon her throne,
Who rallies to her standard a vast host

Of hardy strangers and of faithless Jews:
But He who guides and strengthens me is God.
Think, on this child all Israel's hope depends.
The wrath of God already marks the Queen;
Here have I muster'd you, in her despite,
Nor lack ye warlike arms as she believes.
Haste, crown we Joash, and proclaim him King,
Then, our new Prince's valiant soldiers, march,
Calling on Him with Whom all victory lies,
And, waking loyalty in slumbering hearts,
E'en to her palace track our enemy.
What hearts, so sunk in sloth's inglorious sleep,
Will not be roused to follow in our steps,
When in our sacred ranks they see advance
A King whom God has at His altar fed,
Aaron's successor, and a train of priests
Leading to battle Levi's progeny,
And in those self-same hands, by all revered,
The arms that David hallow'd to the Lord?
Our God shall spread His terror o'er His foes.
Shrink not from bathing you in heathen blood;
Hew down the Tyrians, yea, and Jacob's seed.
Are ye not from those famous Levites sprung
Who, when inconstant Israel wickedly
At Sinai worshipp'd the Egyptian god,
Their dearest kinsmen slew with righteous zeal,
And sanctified their hands in traitor's blood,
Gaining the honour, by this noble deed,
Of serving at the altars of the Lord?
But I perceive your zeal already fired;
Swear then upon this holy volume, first,
Before this King whom Heav'n restores to-day,
To live, to fight, yea, or to die for him!

Azariah. Here swear we, for ourselves and brethren all,
To establish Joash on his father's throne,
Nor, having taken in our hands the sword,
To lay it down till we have slain his foes.
If any one of us should break this vow,
Let him, great God, and let his children feel

Thy vengeance, from Thine heritage shut out,
And number'd with the dead disown'd by Thee!

Jehoiada. And thou, my King, wilt thou not swear to be
Faithful to this eternal Law of God?

Joash. How could I ever wish to disobey?

Jehoiada. My son, once more to call thee by that name——
Suffer this fondness, and forgive the tears
Prompted by too well founded fears for thee.
Far from the throne, in ignorance brought up
Of all the poisonous charms of royalty,
Thou knowest not the intoxicating fumes
Of power uncurb'd, and flattery's magic spells;
Soon will she whisper that the holiest laws,
Though governing the herd, must kings obey;
A monarch owns no bridle but his will;
All else must bow before his majesty;
Subjects are rightly doom'd to toil and tears,
And with a rod of iron should be ruled,
For they will crush him if they be not crush'd.
Thus will fresh pitfalls for your feet be dug,
New snares be spread to spoil your innocence,
Till they have made you hate the truth at last,
By painting virtue in a repulsive guise.
Alas! our wisest king was led astray.
Swear on this book, before these witnesses,
That God shall be thy first and constant care;
Scourge of the evil, refuge of the good,
That you will judge the poor as God directs;
Rememb'ring how, in simple linen clad,
Thou wast thyself a helpless orphan child.

Joash. I promise to observe the Law's commands.
If I forsake Thee, punish me, my God!

Jehoiada. I must anoint thee with the holy oil.
Jehosheba, thou mayest show thyself.

SCENE IV

JOASH, JEHOIADA, JEHOSHEBA, ZACHARIAH, SALOME, AZARIAH, ISHMAEL, *the three other* CHIEFS *of the* LEVITES, *the* CHORUS.

Jehosheba. My King, and son of David! [*Embracing* JOASH.
Joash. Mother dear,
My only mother! Zachariah, come,
Embrace thy brother.
Jehosheba. [*To* ZACHARIAH.] Kneel before thy King.
[ZACHARIAH *casts himself at the feet of* JOASH.
Jehoiada. [*While they embrace one another.*] My children, be united ever thus!
Jehosheba. [*To* JOASH.] Thou knowest then whose blood has given thee life?
Joash. And who had robb'd me of it, but for thee.
Jehosheba. I then may call thee Joash, thy true name.
Joash. And thee shall Joash never cease to love.
The Chorus. Why, there is——
Jehosheba. Joash.
Jehoiada. Hear this messenger.

SCENE V

JOASH, JEHOIADA, JEHOSHEBA, ZACHARIAH, SALOME, AZARIAH, ISHMAEL, *the three other* CHIEFS *of the* LEVITES, *a* LEVITE, *the* CHORUS.

A Levite. I know not what their impious plan may be,
But everywhere resounds the threatening trump,
And amid standards fires are seen to shine;
The Queen is doubtless mustering her troops;
Already, every way of succour closed,
The sacred mount on which the Temple stands
Insolent Tyrians on all sides invest;
And one of these blasphemers now brings word
That Abner is in chains, so can not help.
Jehosheba. [*To* JOASH.] Ah! dearest child, by Heaven in vain restored,
Alas! for safety I can do no more.
God has forgotten David and his seed!

Jehoiada. [*To* JEHOSHEBA.] Dost thou not fear to draw the wrath divine
Down on thyself, and on the King thou lovest?
And e'en though God should snatch him from thine arms,
And will that David's house perish with him,
Art thou not here upon the holy hill,
Where Abraham our father raised his hand
Obediently to slay his blameless son,
Nor murmur'd as he to the altar bound
The fruit of his old age; leaving to God
Fulfilment of his promise, though this son
Held in himself the hope of all his race?
Friends, let us take our several posts: the side
That looks toward the east let Ishmael guard;
Guard thou the north; thou, west; and thou the south.
Take heed that no one, with imprudent zeal,
Levite, or priest, unmasking my designs,
Burst forth in headlong haste before the time;
Let each, as with one common will inspired,
Wherever placed, till death his post maintain.
Our foes regard you, in their blinded rage,
As timid flocks for slaughter set aside,
And think that ye will scatter in dismay.
Let Azariah on the King attend.
[*To* JOASH.] Come, precious scion of a vigorous stock,
And with fresh courage thy defenders fill;
Come, don the diadem before their eyes,
And die, if it must be so, like a King.
[*To* JEHOSHEBA.] Follow him, Princess.
[*To a* LEVITE.] Give me thou those arms.
[*To the* CHORUS.] Offer to God the tears of innocence.

SCENE VI

SALOME, CHORUS

All the Chorus sings. Go forth, ye sons of Aaron, go:
Never did cause of greater fame
The spirit of your sires inflame.
Go forth, ye sons of Aaron, go:

'Tis for your God and King this day ye strike the blow.
One Voice. [*Alone.*] Hast Thou no shafts in store,
That Justice may let fly?
Art thou the jealous God no more,
No longer God of Vengeance throned on high?
Another Voice. Where, God of Jacob, is Thy goodness fled?
With horrors all around us pressing near,
Have but our sins a voice which Thou canst hear?
Wilt Thou on us no more Thy pardon shed?
All the Chorus. Where is Thine ancient lovingkindness fled?
One Voice. [*Alone.*] 'Tis against Thee that in this fray,
The wicked set the arrow to the bow;
"Let us destroy His feasts," say they,
"No longer let the earth His worship show;
Nor his vexatious yoke let mortals longer know.
His altars overturn, His votaries slay,
Till of His name and glory
Remains not e'en the story;
Of Him and His Anointed break the sway."
All the Chorus. Hast Thou no shafts in store,
That Justice may let fly?
Art Thou the jealous God no more,
No longer God of Vengeance throned on high?
One Voice. [*Alone.*] Sad relic of our kings,
Last precious blossom of a stem so fair,
Ah! will the knife this time refuse to spare,
Which to his breast a cruel parent brings?
Tell us, sweet Prince, if o'er thy cradle hovered
Some Angel that protected thee from death?
Or did thy lifeless form in darkness covered,
At God's awakening voice resume its breath?
Another Voice. Great God, dost Thou the guilt upon him lay,
That his rebellious sires forsook Thy way?
Is Thy compassion gone for aye?
The Chorus. Where, God of Jacob, is Thy goodness fled?
Wilt Thou no more Thy gracious pardon shed?
One of the Maidens of the Chorus. [*Speaking, not singing.*]
Dear sisters, cruel Tyrians hem us round,
Do ye not hear their trumpets' dreadful sound?

Salome. Yea, and I hear them raise their savage cry;
I tremble with alarm;
Haste, let us to our place of refuge fly,
Where God's Almighty Arm
Shall in His Temple shelter us from harm.

ACT V

SCENE I

ZACHARIAH, SALOME, CHORUS

SALOME. What news, dear Zachariah, dost thou bring?
Zachariah. Double the fervour of your prayers to Heaven!
Sister, our latest hour perhaps draws nigh.
For the dread conflict orders have been given.
Salome. And what does Joash?
Zachariah. He has just been crown'd,
And by the High Priest with the holy oil
Anointed. Oh, what joy in every eye
Welcomed a sovereign ransom'd from the tomb,
A scar still showing where the dagger fell!
There too might have been seen his faithful nurse,
Who, almost hidden in a far recess,
Was watching her loved charge, though none but God
And our dear mother witness'd her concern.
Our Levites wept in tenderness and joy,
Mingling with sobs their cries of glad delight:
He 'mid these transports, all untouch'd by pride,
Gave gracious smiles, words, pressure of the hand;
And, swearing to conform with their advice,
This one his father, that his brother call'd.
Salome. And has our secret reached the world without?
Zachariah. 'Tis known to none beyond the Temple walls.
The sons of Levi, in divided bands,
Are ranged in solemn silence at the doors,

All in an instant ready to rush forth
And raise the signal shout, "Long live the King!"
But Azariah has been strictly charged
To guard the Prince's life from any risk.
Meanwhile the scornful Queen, dagger in hand,
Laughs at our frail defence of brazen doors,
Awaits the engines that shall break them down,
And threatens blood and ruin with each breath.
Some priests, my sister, ventured to advise
That in a crypt, dug in the days of old,
We should at least the precious Ark conceal.
"Such fears insult our God," my father said;
"Shall then the Ark that caused proud towers to fall,
That drove the waters of the Jordan back,
And shatter'd to the earth Philistia's gods,
Flee from before a shameless woman's face!"
Our mother, standing near in mortal dread,
Now to the Prince, now to the altar turns
Her wavering glance, yielding to mute alarm,
A sight to make a very savage weep.
From time to time the King, with fond embrace,
Soothes her.—Dear sisters, follow in my steps,
And, if this day our King is doom'd to die,
Let the same fate with him unite us all.

Salome. What rude hand knocks with quick-repeated strokes?
What makes these Levites in confusion run?
Why with such caution do they hide their arms?
Say, is the Temple forced?

Zachariah. Your fears dispel,
God sends us Abner.

SCENE II

Jehoiada, Jehosheba, Zachariah, Salome, Abner, Ishmael, Two Levites, Chorus

Jehoiada. Can I trust mine eyes?
How did dear Abner find his way to us,
E'en through the enemy's blockading camp?

'Twas said that Athaliah, to insure
The execution of her cruel plots,
Had bound in iron chains thy generous hands.

Abner. My lord, she fear'd my courage and my zeal,
And worse than fetters gave me for reward,
Confining me within a loathsome den,
To wait until the Temple should be burn'd,
And she, unsated still with streams of blood,
Should come to free me from an irksome life,
And cut short days, which sorrows to survive
My princes should have ended long ago.

Jehoiada. What miracle procured thee thy release?

Abner. God only knows how works her cruel heart.
She sent for me; and said with anxious air:
"Thou seest this Temple by my troops beset;
Soon will the vengeful flames but ashes leave,
In spite of all thy god can do to save.
Yet upon two conditions may his priests
Redeem their lives, but no time must be lost,
That in my power they place Eliakim,
With treasure known to them, and them alone,
Amass'd by David when he reign'd of yore,
And left a secret in the High Priest's charge,
Go, tell them on these terms I let them live."

Jehoiada. What course, dear Abner, thinkest thou the best?

Abner. Give her the gold, if it indeed be true,
That in thy keeping David's treasure lies,
And all besides, that from her greedy hands
Thou hitherto hast saved, precious and rare.
Give all; or thou wilt have vile murderers come,
To break the altar, burn the cherubim,
And, on our sacred Ark laying rude hands,
Stain with thy priestly blood the inner shrine.

Jehoiada. But, Abner, how can I in honour yield
To punishment a poor unhappy child,
Whom God Himself intrusted to my care,
And save our lives by sacrificing his?

Abner. Would to Almighty God, Who sees my heart,
That Athaliah might forget the boy,

And be content her cruelty to slake
With Abner's blood, thinking thereby to soothe
Her angry gods! But what avails your care?
If ye all perish, will he die the less?
Does God command what is impossible?
When, in obedience to a tyrant's law,
His mother trusted Moses to the Nile,
Almost as soon as born, condemn'd to die;
Yet God, against all hope, his life preserved,
And made the King himself his childhood rear.
Who knows His purpose toward Eliakim?
E'en such a lot may be for him in store,
And the fell murderess of the royal seed
Be render'd sensitive to pity's touch.
Not long ago I saw steal o'er her face
A tender look, that by Jehosheba
Was mark'd as well, calming her wrathful mood.
Princess, the hour of danger claims thy voice!
What! Shall Jehoiada, with thy consent,
For a mere stranger, let his son and thee,
Yea all this people, fruitlessly be slain,
And flames devour the only spot on earth
Where God is worshipp'd? What could ye do more,
Were he the sole survivor of our Kings,
Your ancestors?

Jehosheba. [*Aside to* Jehoiada.] Thou seest his loyal heart;
Tell him the truth.

Jehoiada. The time is not yet come.

Abner. Time is more precious than thou thinkest, sir.
While thou art doubting what reply to give,
Mattan, at Athaliah's ear, demands,
Burning with rage, a speedy massacre.
Must I fall prostrate at thy hallow'd knees?
Now in the name of that Most Holy Place,
Unseen by mortal eye save thine, where dwells
God's glory; howsoever hard the task,
Let us think how to meet the sudden blow.
I only beg a moment's breathing space:
To-morrow, yea to-night, I will secure

The Temple, and make outrage dangerous.
But I perceive my words are lost on thee,
Tears and entreaties powerless to persuade,
Too strict thy sense of duty to give way.
Well, find me then some weapon, spear or sword,
And where the foe await me, at these gates,
Abner at least can die a soldier's death.

Jehoiada. I yield. Your proffer'd counsel I embrace:
Abner, we will avert these threaten'd ills.
'Tis true that David left a treasure here,
That to my charge was trusted, the last hope
Left to the Jews in their calamities;
My watchful care bestowed it secretly,
But, since we can not hide it from your Queen,
She shall be satisfied, and through these doors
Enter, attended by her officers;
But from these altars let her keep afar
The savage fury of her foreign troops,
And spare the House of God from pillage dire.
Arrange with her the number of her train,
Children and priests can small suspicion rouse.
Touching this child she dreads so much, to thee,
Knowing thine upright heart, I will unfold
The secret of his birth, when she can hear;
And thou shalt judge between us, if I must
Place this young boy in Athaliah's power.

Abner. I take him under my protection now;
Fear naught, my lord. Back to the Queen I haste.

SCENE III

Jehoiada, Jehosheba, Zachariah, Salome, Ishmael, Two Levites, Chorus

Jehoiada. Great God! The hour is come that brings Thy prey!
Hark, Ishmael. [*He whispers in his ear.*

Jehosheba. Almighty King of Heav'n,
Place a thick veil before her eyes once more,
As when, making her crime of none effect,

Thou in my bosom didst her victim hide.

Jehoiada. Good Ishmael, go, there is no time to lose;
Fulfil precisely this important task;
And, above all, take heed, when she arrives
And passes, that no threatening signs be seen.
Children, for Joash be a throne prepared;
Let our arm'd Levites on his steps attend.
Princess, bring hither too his trusty nurse,
And dry the copious fountain of thy tears.
[*To a* LEVITE.] Soon as the Queen, madly presumptuous,
Has cross'd the threshold of the Temple gates,
Let all retreat be made impossible;
That very moment let the martial trump
Wake sudden terror in the hostile camp:
Call all the people to support their King,
And make her ears ring with the wondrous tale
Of Joash by God's providence preserved.
He comes.

SCENE IV

JEHOIADA, JEHOSHEBA, ZACHARIAH, SALOME, JOASH, AZARIAH, *a* Band *of* PRIESTS *and* LEVITES, CHORUS

Jehoiada continues. Ye Levites, and ye priests of God,
Range yourselves round, but do not show yourselves;
Leave it to me to keep your zeal in check,
And tarry till my voice bids you appear.
[*They all hide themselves.*
My King, methinks this hope rewards thy vows;
Come, see thy foes fall prostrate at thy feet.
She who in fury sought thine infant life
Comes hither in hot haste to slay thee now;
But fear her not: think that upon our side
Stands the destroying angel as thy guard.
Ascend thy throne.—The gates are opening wide;
One moment let this curtain cover thee. [*He draws a curtain.*
Princess, thy colour changes.

Jehosheba. Can I see
Assassins fill God's house, and not grow pale?
Why, look how numerous the retinue——

Jehoiada. I see them shut the Temple doors again.
All is secure.

SCENE V

JOASH, JEHOIADA, JEHOSHEBA, ABNER, ATHALIAH, *and her* Attendants

[JOASH *is hidden behind the curtain.*

Athaliah. [*To* JEHOIADA.] Deceiver, there thou art!
Author of mischief, plots, conspiracies,
Whose hopes are all upon disturbance based,
Inveterate foe of sovereign majesty!
Dost thou still lean upon thy god's support,
Or has that flimsy trust forsaken thee?
He leaves thee and thy Temple in my pow'r.
Well might I on the altar thou dost serve——
But no, thine offer'd ransom shall suffice;
Fulfil what thou hast promised. That young boy,
That treasure which thou must to me resign,
Where are they?

Jehoiada. Straight shalt thou be satisfied:
I am about to show them both at once.

[*The curtain is drawn up.* JOASH *is discovered on his throne; his nurse is kneeling on his right;* AZARIAH, *sword in hand, is standing on his left; and near him* ZACHARIAH *and* SALOME *are kneeling on the steps of the throne; a number of* LEVITES, *with swords in their hands, are ranged on either side.*

Appear, dear child, worthy of royal sires.
Queen, dost thou recognise King David's heir?
Observe at least these marks thy dagger left:
Behold thine offspring, Ahaziah's son!
Welcome King Joash, Abner, people all!

Abner. Heavens!

Athaliah. Traitor!

Jehoiada. See this faithful Jewess here,
Whose bosom, as thou knowest, nursed him then.
Saved from thy fury by Jehosheba,
Within this Temple God has guarded him.
Lo, here is all of David's treasure left!

Athaliah. Traitor, thy fraud will but destroy the child:
Rid me, my soldiers, of this vile pretence!

Jehoiada. Soldiers of God, draw near, defend your King.

[*The back of the stage opens: the interior of the Temple is shown; and armed* LEVITES *enter from all around upon the stage.*

Athaliah. Treason! Oh, where am I, unhappy Queen?
Weapons and enemies on every side!

Jehoiada. Thy search is vain, thou canst not 'scape the toils
Cast round thee by the God whom thou hast scorn'd.
Into our hands has He deliver'd thee;
Drunken with blood He calls thee to His bar.

Athaliah. My warriors are turn'd craven, numb with fear:
Abner, is this thy coward's snare?

Abner. My Queen,
As God is witness——

Athaliah. Never mind thy god,
Avenge me.

Abner. Upon whom? Joash? My prince?

[*Throwing himself at the feet of* JOASH.

Athaliah. He Joash! He thy King! Bethink you, knaves,
That ye are still beleaguer'd by my arms;
I hear my soldiers call me with loud shouts.
Tremble, ye rebels! Succour is at hand.

SCENE VI

JOASH, ATHALIAH, JEHOIADA, ISHMAEL, *and all the* Actors *in the preceding Scene*

Ishmael. [*To* JEHOIADA.] My lord, our foes have left the Temple free:
The foreigners are fled, the Jews submit.
As smoke is driv'n away before the wind,
Th' Almighty's voice this army has dispersed.
Our Levites, high above the courts around,
Have Ahaziah's son to all proclaim'd,
Told of his infant life saved from the sword,
And Athaliah's fall into the snare.
The trumpets sounded from all sides at once,

And, mingled with their cries, such terror spread
Throughout the camp as struck with wild dismay
Proud Midian at the flash of Gideon's sword.
The Tyrians, casting arms and shields away,
The first, in all directions disappear'd.
Some Jews, in dazed confusion, shared their flight;
The rest for Joash loudly have declared,
Owning herein the guiding hand of God.
Yea, all the people, with one heart inspired,
Women, old men, and babes embrace with joy,
Blessing Jehovah and the King He sends,
And hymn the son of David raised to life.
And in the holy city execrate
The name of Baal, and destroy his shrine.
Mattan is slain.

Athaliah. Jehovah, thou hast won!
Yes, it is Joash. Vain denial now!
'Twas here I gave command to have him slain;
He has the mien and features of his sire;
I trace his kinship with the line I hate.
Thus David triumphs, Ahab is destroy'd.
Relentless god, this is thy work alone,
With hopes of easy vengeance luring me,
And twenty times a day setting my thoughts
In conflict, now remorseful for this child,
Now dazzled with the prospect of rich spoil,
And loath to give it to devouring flames.
Well let him reign, thy care and handiwork!
And, to inaugurate his sovereignty,
Bid him direct this dagger to my heart!
This for my grandson is my dying wish——
My wish, nay more than wish, my trust and hope;
That weary of thy law, thy yoke contemn'd,
True to the blood of Ahab, drawn from me,
Following his grandsire's and his father's steps,
He, David's heir, shall make himself abhorr'd,
Profane thine altar, rob thee of thy rites,
So avenge Ahab, Jezebel, and me!

[Athaliah *goes out, the* Levites *follow her.*

Jehoiada. Out of the Temple precincts have her forth
At once, nor be its holy courts profaned.
Go, and avenge your princes massacred,
Whose blood cries out till pacified by hers.
If any venture to defend her cause,
Him let the sword, along with her, devour.

SCENE VII

JOASH, JEHOIADA, JEHOSHEBA, ABNER, *and all the* Actors *in the preceding Scene*

Joash. [*After descending from his throne.*] Thou seest, O Lord, the anguish of my soul;
Oh, turn her malediction from me far,
And never suffer it to be fulfill'd!
Let Joash die ere he forgets his God!

Jehoiada. [*To the* LEVITES.] Call all the people, they shall see their King.
Let them approach, and fresh allegiance swear.
Kings, priests, and people, let us all confirm
The covenant that Jacob made with God,
Grateful for mercy, for our sins ashamed,
And with new vows binding ourselves to Him.
Abner, resume thy post beside the King.

SCENE VIII

JOASH, JEHOIADA, *a* LEVITE, *and all the* Actors *in the preceding Scene*

Jehoiada. [*To the* LEVITE.] Well, has that monster met with punishment?

The Levite. Her guilt has been atoned for with the sword.
Jerusalem, so long her fury's prey,
Relieved at last from her detested yoke,
With joy beholds her weltering in her blood.

Jehoiada. By this, the dreadful end her crimes deserved,
Learn, King of Judah, nor this truth forget——
Kings have in Heaven their Judge severe, Who to the fatherless
Is Father, and will punish those who innocence oppress!



GOTTHOLD EPHRAIM LESSING

From a painting by Carl Jäger

MINNA VON BARNHELM

BY

GOTTHOLD EPHRAIM LESSING

Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, the reformer of German literature, was born in Kamenz, a small town of Saxony, January 22, 1729. He is often compared with Luther in his relation to German life and thought. "Like Luther, he was the founder of a new religion and a new literature. Like Luther, he is distinguished by earnestness, ardour, true manliness, fierce hatred of dissimulation, largeness of mind, and breadth and profundity of thought." His father, who was pastor of his native town, intended him for the ministry, and with that end in view sent him for five years to the Fürstenschule at Meissen, and finally to Leipzig in 1746. But instead of theology he cultivated a taste for the stage, was a constant attendant at the theatre, and himself wrote plays—mostly comedies after the French manner. Here, too, he ran into debt, and in 1748, on the closing of the theatres, he left Leipzig to live by his pen. He spent a few months in Wittenberg, and then went to Berlin. The shock to his orthodox parents was complete when here he joined Mylius, a notorious free-thinker, and with him published the "Beiträge zur Historie des Theaters" (1750). In Berlin he lived by writing plays, translating, and doing literary hack-work, chiefly for Voss's "Zeitung." In 1751 he withdrew to Wittenberg, and in 1752 he reappeared in Berlin, as suddenly as he had left it. To this period belongs his friendship with Friedrich Nicolai and Moses Mendelssohn; several of his minor plays, "The Jews," "The Woman-Hater," "The Freethinker," "The Treasure," the fragment "Samuel Henzi," and his "Vademecum für Herrn E. G. Lange." In 1755 his great play, "Miss Sara Sampson," the first attempt at German domestic drama, was produced with great success at Frankfort-on-the-Oder. On the reopening of the theatre in Leipzig, he returned to that city, and, in May, 1756, set out with Winkler, a rich merchant, to make a tour of England. From Holland they were recalled by the beginning of the Seven Years' War, and Lessing settled down in Leipzig near his friend, the poet Von Kleist. In 1758 he was again in Berlin, editing with Mendelssohn the "Literaturbriefe," a new critical journal, which contains some of his best writing. From November, 1760, to the spring of 1765 he was secretary to General von Tauentzien, the military governor of Breslau. Between this time and his appointment as dramatic critic to the new national theatre of Hamburg (1767) appeared his great critical essay "Laokoon" and his greatest comedy, "Minna von Barnhelm." This post, which promised so much, soon failed, leaving him a poorer and wiser man; but he gave to the world the "Hamburgische Dramaturgie" (1767–'69), the greatest work of dramatic criticism of modern times; the "Briefe antiquarische Inhalts" (1769), in answer to Professor Klotz, of Halle; and the beautiful "Wie die Alten den Tod gebildet" (1769). In October, 1769, he accepted from the Duke of Brunswick the librarianship of the Wolfenbüttel Library. Here, in 1772, he finished his greatest tragedy, "Emilia Galotti," and in 1776, after a six months' tour of Italy with the Duke of Brunswick, married Eva König, the widow of a Hamburg merchant. After one year of happy married life—probably the single year of happiness in Lessing's experience—his wife died. In 1777 appeared the "Wolfenbüttelsche Fragmente," a rationalistic attack on Christianity, by Samuel Reimarus, a Hamburg professor, of which Lessing acted as editor. It was universally ascribed to Lessing, and the remainder of his life was spent in defending himself from the attacks of the orthodox Lutherans. "Anti-Goeze" (1778), "Nathan der Weise," tragedy (1779), and "Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlects" (1780) are the chief works of this period. The last to appear was "Ernst und Falk" (1778–'80). Lessing died in Brunswick, February 15, 1781.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Major von Tellheim, a discharged officer.
Minna von Barnhelm.
Count von Bruchsal, her uncle.
Franziska, her lady's maid.
Just, servant to the Major.
Paul Werner, an old sergeant of the Major's.
The Landlord of an inn.
A Lady.
An Orderly.
Riccaut de la Marlinière.

The Scene alternates between the Parlour of an Inn and a Room adjoining it

MINNA VON BARNHELM

ACT I

SCENE I

JUST

JUST. [*Sitting in a corner, and talking while asleep.*] Rogue of a landlord! You treat us so? On, comrade! hit hard! [*He strikes with his fist, and wakes through the exertion.*] Ha! there he is again! I can not shut an eye without fighting with him. I wish he got but half the blows. Why, it is morning! I must look for my poor master at once; if I can help it, he shall not set foot in the cursed house again. I wonder where he has passed the night?

SCENE II

LANDLORD, JUST

Landlord. Good-morning, Herr Just; good-morning! What, up so early! Or shall I say—up so late?

Just. Say which you please.

Land. I say only—good-morning! and that deserves, I suppose, that Herr Just should answer "Many thanks."

Just. Many thanks.

Land. One is peevish, if one can't have one's proper rest. What will you bet the Major has not returned home, and you have been keeping watch for him?

Just. How the man can guess everything!

Land. I surmise, I surmise.

Just. [*Turns round to go.*] Your servant!

Land. [*Stops him.*] Not so, Herr Just!

Just. Very well, then, not your servant!

Land. What, Herr Just, I do hope you are not still angry about yesterday's affair! Who would keep his anger over-night?

Just. I; and over a good many nights.

Land. Is that like a Christian?

Just. As much so as to turn an honourable man who can not pay to a day, out of doors, into the street.

Land. Fie! who would be so wicked?

Just. A Christian innkeeper.—My master! such a man! such an officer!

Land. I thrust him from the house into the streets? I have far too much respect for an officer to do that, and far too much pity for a discharged one! I was obliged to have another room prepared for him. Think no more about it, Herr Just. [*Calls.*] Hullo! I will make it good in another way. [*A lad comes.*] Bring a glass; Herr Just will have a drop; something good.

Just. Do not trouble yourself, Mr. Landlord. May the drop turn to poison, which— But I will not swear; I have not yet breakfasted.

Land. [*To the lad, who brings a bottle of spirits and a glass.*] Give it here; go! Now, Herr Just; something quite excellent; strong, delicious, and wholesome. [*Fills and holds it out to him.*] That can set an overtaxed stomach to rights again!

Just. I hardly ought!—And yet why should I let my health suffer on account of his incivility? [*Takes it and drinks.*

Land. May it do you good, Herr Just!

Just. [*Giving the glass back.*] Not bad! But, Landlord, you are nevertheless an ill-mannered brute!

Land. Not so, not so!—Come, another glass; one can not stand upon one leg.

Just. [*After drinking.*] I must say so much—it is good, very good! Made at home, Landlord?

Land. At home, indeed! True Dantzig, real double distilled!

Just. Look ye, Landlord; if I could play the hypocrite, I would do so for such stuff as that; but I can not, so it must out.—You are an ill-mannered brute all the same.

Land. Nobody in my life ever told me that before.—But another glass, Herr Just; three is the lucky number!

Just. With all my heart!—[*Drinks.*] Good stuff, indeed, capital! But truth is good also, and indeed, Landlord, you are an ill-mannered brute all the same!

Land. If I was, do you think I should let you say so?

Just. Oh! yes; a brute seldom has spirit.

Land. One more, Herr Just; a four-stranded rope is the strongest.

Just. No, enough is as good as a feast! And what good will it do you, Landlord? I shall stick to my text till the last drop in the bottle. Shame, Landlord, to have such good Dantzig, and such bad manners! To turn out of his room, in his absence—a man like my master, who has lodged at your house above a year; from whom you have had already so many shining thalers; who never owed a heller in his life—because he let payment run for a couple of months, and because he does not spend quite so much as he used.

Land. But suppose I really wanted the room and saw beforehand that the Major would willingly have given it up if we could only have waited some time for his return! Should I let strange gentlefolk like them drive away again from my door? Should I wilfully send such a prize into the clutches of another innkeeper? Besides, I don't believe they could have got a lodging elsewhere. The inns are all now quite full. Could such a young, beautiful, amiable lady remain in the street? Your master is much too gallant for that. And what does he lose by the change? Have not I given him another room?

Just. By the pigeon-house, at the back, with a view between a neighbour's chimneys.

Land. The view was uncommonly fine, before the confounded neighbour obstructed it. The room is otherwise very nice, and is papered——

Just. Has been!

Land. No, one side is so still. And the little room adjoining, what is the matter with that? It has a chimney which, perhaps, smokes somewhat in the winter——

Just. But does very nicely in the summer. I believe, Landlord, you are mocking us in the bargain!

Land. Come, come; Herr Just, Herr Just——

Just. Don't make Herr Just's head hot——

Land. I make his head hot? It is the Dantzig does that.

Just. An officer, like my master! Or do you think that a discharged officer is not an officer, who may break your neck for you? Why were you all, you Landlords, so civil during the war? Why was every officer an honourable man then, and every soldier a worthy, brave fellow? Does this bit of a peace make you so bumptious?

Land. What makes you fly out so, Herr Just?

Just. I will fly out.

SCENE III

Major von Tellheim, Landlord, Just

Maj. T. [*Entering.*] Just!

Just. [*Supposing the* Landlord *is still speaking.*] Just? Are we so intimate?

Maj. T. Just!

Just. I thought I was "Herr Just" with you.

Land. [*Seeing the* Major.] Hist! hist! Herr Just, Herr Just, look round; your master——

Maj. T. Just, I think you are quarrelling! What did I tell you?

Land. Quarrel, your honour? God forbid! Would your most humble servant dare to quarrel with one who has the honour of being in your service?

Just. If I could but give him a good whack on that cringing cat's back of his!

Land. It is true Herr Just speaks up for his master, and rather warmly; but in that he is right. I esteem him so much the more: I like him for it.

Just. I should like to knock his teeth out for him!

Land. It is only a pity that he puts himself in a passion for nothing. For I feel quite sure that your honour is not displeased with me in this matter, since—necessity—made it necessary——

Maj. T. More than enough, sir! I am in your debt; you turn out my room in my absence. You must be paid, I must seek a lodging elsewhere. Very natural.

Land. Elsewhere? You are not going to quit, honoured sir? Oh, unfortunate stricken man that I am! No, never! Sooner shall the lady give up the apartments again. The Major can not and will not let her have his room. It is his; she must go; I can not help it. I will go, honoured sir——

Maj. T. My friend, do not make two foolish strokes instead of one. The lady must retain possession of the room——

Land. And your honour could suppose that from distrust, from fear of not being paid, I— As if I did not know that your honour could pay me as soon as you pleased. The sealed purse—five hundred thalers in louis d'ors marked on it—which your honour had in your writing-desk—is in good keeping.

Maj. T. I trust so; as the rest of my property. Just shall take them into his keeping, when he has paid your bill——

Land. Really, I was quite alarmed when I found the purse. I always considered your honour a methodical and prudent man, who never got quite out of money—but still, had I supposed there was ready money in the desk——

Maj. T. You would have treated me rather more civilly. I understand you. Go, sir; leave me. I wish to speak with my servant.

Land. But, honoured sir——

Maj. T. Come, Just; he does not wish to permit me to give my orders to you in his house.

Land. I am going, honoured sir! My whole house is at your service. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV

MAJOR VON TELLHEIM, JUST

Just. [*Stamping with his foot and spitting after the* LANDLORD.] Ugh!

Maj. T. What is the matter?

Just. I am choking with rage.

Maj. T. That is as bad as from plethora.

Just. And for you, sir, I hardly know you any longer. May I die before your eyes, if you do not encourage this malicious, unfeeling wretch! In spite of gallows, axe, and torture I could —yes, I could have throttled him with these hands, and torn him to pieces with these teeth!

Maj. T. You wild beast!

Just. Better a wild beast than such a man!

Maj. T. But what is it that you want?

Just. I want you to perceive how much he insults you.

Maj. T. And then——

Just. To take your revenge— No, the fellow is beneath your notice!

Maj. T. But to commission you to avenge me? That was my intention from the first. He should not have seen me again, but have received the amount of his bill from your hands. I know that you can throw down a handful of money with a tolerably contemptuous mien.

Just. Oh! a pretty sort of revenge!

Maj. T. Which, however, we must defer. I have not one heller of ready money, and I know not where to raise any.

Just. No money! What is that purse then with five hundred dollars' worth of louis d'ors, which the Landlord found in your desk?

Maj. T. That is money given into my charge.

Just. Not the hundred pistoles which your old sergeant brought you four or five weeks back?

Maj. T. The same. Paul Werner's; right.

Just. And you have not used them yet? Yet, sir, you may do what you please with them. I will answer for it that——

Maj. T. Indeed!

Just. Werner heard from me, how they had treated your claims upon the War Office. He heard——

Maj. T. That I should certainly be a beggar soon, if I was not one already. I am much obliged to you, Just. And the news induced Werner to offer to share his little all with me. I am very glad that I guessed this. Listen, Just; let me have your account, directly too; we must part.

Just. How! what!

Maj. T. Not a word. There is some one coming.

SCENE V

LADY *in mourning*, MAJOR VON TELLHEIM, JUST

Lady. I ask your pardon, sir.

Maj. T. Whom do you seek, Madam?

Lady. The worthy gentleman with whom I have the honour of speaking. You do not know me again. I am the widow of your late captain.

Maj. T. Good heavens, Madam, how you are changed!

Lady. I have just risen from a sick-bed, to which grief on the loss of my husband brought me. I am troubling you at a very early hour, Major von Tellheim, but I am going into the country, where a kind, but also unfortunate, friend has for the present offered me an asylum.

Maj. T. [*To* JUST.] Leave us.

SCENE VI

LADY, MAJOR VON TELLHEIM

Maj. T. Speak freely, Madam! You must not be ashamed of your bad fortune before me. Can I serve you in any way?

Lady. Major——

Maj. T. I pity you, Madam! How can I serve you? You know your husband was my friend; my friend, I say, and I have always been sparing of this title.

Lady. Who knows better than I do how worthy you were of his friendship—how worthy he was of yours? You would have been in his last thoughts, your name would have been the last sound on his dying lips, had not natural affection, stronger than friendship, demanded this sad prerogative for his unfortunate son and his unhappy wife.

Maj. T. Cease, Madam! I could willingly weep with you; but I have no tears to-day. Spare me! You come to me at a time when I might easily be misled to murmur against Providence. Oh! honest Marloff! Quick, Madam, what have you to request? If it is in my power to assist you, if it is in my power——

Lady. I can not depart without fulfilling his last wishes. He recollected, shortly before his death, that he was dying a

debtor to you, and he conjured me to discharge his debt with the first ready money I should have. I have sold his carriage, and come to redeem his note.

Maj. T. What, Madam? Is that your object in coming?

Lady. It is. Permit me to count out the money to you.

Maj. T. No, Madam. Marloff a debtor to me! that can hardly be. Let us look, however. [*Takes out a pocketbook and searches.*] I find nothing of the kind.

Lady. You have doubtless mislaid his note; besides, it is nothing to the purpose. Permit me——

Maj. T. No, Madam; I am careful not to mislay such documents. If I have not got it, it is a proof that I never had it, or that it has been honoured and already returned by me.

Lady. Major!

Maj. T. Without doubt, Madam; Marloff does not owe me anything—nor can I remember that he ever did owe me anything. This is so, Madam. He has much rather left me in his debt. I have never been able to do anything to repay a man who shared with me good and ill luck, honour and danger, for six years. I shall not forget that he has left a son. He shall be my son, as soon as I can be a father to him. The embarrassment in which I am at present——

Lady. Generous man! But do not think so meanly of me. Take the money, Major, and then at least I shall be at ease.

Maj. T. What more do you require to tranquillize you, than my assurance that the money does not belong to me? Or do you wish that I should rob the young orphan of my friend? Rob, Madam; for that it would be in the true meaning of the word. The money belongs to him; invest it for him.

Lady. I understand you; pardon me if I do not yet rightly know how to accept a kindness. Where have you learned that a mother will do more for her child than for the preservation of her own life? I am going——

Maj. T. Go, Madam, and may you have a prosperous journey! I do not ask you to let me hear from you. Your news might come to me when it might be of little use to me. There is yet one thing, Madam; I had nearly forgotten that which is of most consequence. Marloff also had claims upon the chest of our old regiment. His claims are as good as mine. If

my demands are paid, his must be paid also. I will be answerable for them.

Lady. Oh! Sir—but what can I say? Thus to purpose future good deeds is, in the eyes of Heaven, to have performed them already. May you receive its reward, as well as my tears. [*Exit.*

SCENE VII

MAJOR VON TELLHEIM

Maj. T. Poor, good woman! I must not forget to destroy the bill. [*Takes some papers from his pocketbook and destroys them.*] Who would guarantee that my own wants might not some day tempt me to make use of it?

SCENE VIII

JUST, MAJOR VON TELLHEIM

Maj. T. Is that you, Just?

Just. [*Wiping his eyes.*] Yes.

Maj. T. You have been crying?

Just. I have been writing out my account in the kitchen, and the place is full of smoke. Here it is, sir.

Maj. T. Give it to me.

Just. Be merciful with me, sir. I know well that they have not been so with you; still——

Maj. T. What do you want?

Just. I should sooner have expected my death than my discharge.

Maj. T. I can not keep you any longer: I must learn to manage without servants. [*Opens the paper, and reads.*] "What my master, the Major, owes me:—Three months and a half wages, six thalers per month, is 21 thalers. During the first part of this month, laid out in sundries—1 thaler 7 groschen 9 pfennigs. Total, 22 thalers 7 groschen 9 pfennigs." Right; and it is just that I also pay your wages, for the whole of the current month.

Just. Turn over, sir.

Maj. T. Oh! more? [*Reads.*] "What I owe my master, the Major:—Paid for me to the army-surgeon, twenty-five thalers. Attendance and nurse during my cure, paid for me, thirty-nine

thalers. Advanced, at my request, to my father—who was burnt out of his house and robbed—without reckoning the two horses of which he made him a present, fifty thalers. Total, 114 thalers. Deduct the above 22 thalers 7 groschen 9 pfennigs; I remain in debt to my master, the Major, 91 thalers 16 groschen 3 pfennigs." You are mad, my good fellow!

Just. I willingly grant that I owe you much more; but it would be wasting ink to write it down. I can not pay you that: and if you take my livery from me too, which, by the way, I have not yet earned—I would rather you had let me die in the workhouse.

Maj. T. For what do you take me? You owe me nothing; and I will recommend you to one of my friends, with whom you will fare better than with me.

Just. I do not owe you anything, and yet you turn me away!

Maj. T. Because I do not wish to owe you anything.

Just. On that account? Only on that account? As certain as I am in your debt, as certain as you can never be in mine, so certainly shall you not turn me away now. Do what you will, Major, I remain in your service; I must remain.

Maj. T. With your obstinacy, your insolence, your savage boisterous temper toward all who you think have no business to speak to you, your malicious pranks, your love of revenge——

Just. Make me as bad as you will, I shall not think worse of myself than of my dog. Last winter I was walking one evening at dusk along the river, when I heard something whine. I stooped down, and reached in the direction whence the sound came, and when I thought I was saving a child, I pulled a dog out of the water. That is well, thought I. The dog followed me; but I am not fond of dogs, so I drove him away—in vain. I whipped him away—in vain. I shut him out of my room at night; he lay down before the door. If he came too near me, I kicked him; he yelped, looked up at me, and wagged his tail. I have never yet given him a bit of bread with my own hand; and yet I am the only person whom he will obey, or who dare touch him. He jumps about me, and shows off his tricks to me, without my asking for them. He

is an ugly dog, but he is a good animal. If he carries it on much longer, I shall at last give over hating him.

Maj. T. [*Aside.*] As I do him. No, there is no one perfectly inhuman. Just, we will not part.

Just. Certainly not! And you wanted to manage without servants! You forget your wounds, and that you only have the use of one arm. Why, you are not able to dress alone. I am indispensable to you; and I am—without boasting, Major,—I am a servant who, if the worst comes to the worst, can beg and steal for his master.

Maj. T. Just, we will part.

Just. All right, sir!

SCENE IX

SERVANT, MAJOR VON TELLHEIM, JUST

Ser. I say, comrade!

Just. What is the matter?

Ser. Can you direct me to the officer who lodged yesterday in that room? [*Pointing to the one out of which he is coming.*

Just. That I could easily do. What have you got for him?

Ser. What we always have, when we have nothing—compliments. My mistress hears that he has been turned out on her account. My mistress knows good manners, and I am therefore to beg his pardon.

Just. Well, then, beg his pardon; there he stands.

Ser. What is he? What is his name?

Maj. T. I have already heard your message, my friend. It is unnecessary politeness on the part of your mistress, which I beg to acknowledge duly. Present my compliments to her. What is the name of your mistress?

Ser. Her name! We call her my lady.

Maj. T. The name of her family?

Ser. I have not heard that yet, and it is not my business to ask. I manage so that I generally get a new master every six weeks. Hang all their names!

Just. Bravo, comrade!

Ser. I was engaged by my present mistress a few days ago, in Dresden. I believe she has come here to look for her lover.

Maj. T. Enough, friend. I wished to know the name of your mistress, not her secrets. Go!

Ser. Comrade, he would not do for my master.

SCENE X

Major von Tellheim, Just

Maj. T. Just! see that we get out of this house directly! The politeness of this strange lady affects me more than the churlishness of the host. Here, take this ring—the only thing of value which I have left—of which I never thought of making such a use. Pawn it! get eighty louis d'ors for it: our host's bill can scarcely amount to thirty. Pay him, and remove my things.—Ah, where? Where you will. The cheaper the inn, the better. You will find me in the neighbouring coffee-house. I am going; you will see to it all properly?

Just. Have no fear, Major!

Maj. T. [*Comes back.*] Above all things, do not let my pistols be forgotten, which hang beside the bed.

Just. I will forget nothing.

Maj. T. [*Comes back again.*] Another thing: bring your dog with you too. Do you hear, Just?

SCENE XI

Just

Just. The dog will not stay behind, he will take care of that. Hem! My master still had this valuable ring! and carried it in his pocket instead of on his finger! My good landlord, we are not yet so poor as we look. To him himself, I will pawn you, you beautiful little ring! I know he will be annoyed that you will not all be consumed in his house. Ah!——

SCENE XII

Paul Werner, Just

Just. Hullo, Werner! good-day to you, Werner. Welcome to the town.

Wer. The accursed village! I can't manage to get at home

in it again. Merry, my boys, merry; I have got some more money! Where is the Major?

Just. He must have met you; he just went downstairs.

Wer. I came up the back stairs. How is he? I should have been with you last week, but——

Just. Well, what prevented you?

Wer. Just, did you ever hear of Prince Heraclius?

Just. Heraclius? Not that I know of.

Wer. Don't you know the great hero of the East?

Just. I know the wise men of the East well enough, who go about with the stars on New Year's Eve.[1]

Wer. Brother, I believe you read the newspapers as little as the Bible. You do not know Prince Heraclius? Not know the brave man who seized Persia, and will break into the Ottoman Porte in a few days? Thank God, there is still war somewhere in the world! I have long enough hoped it would break out here again. But there they sit and take care of their skins. No, a soldier I was, and a soldier I must be again! In short [*looking round carefully, to see if any one is listening*], between ourselves, Just, I am going to Persia, to have a few campaigns against the Turks, under his Royal Highness Prince Heraclius.

Just. You?

Wer. I myself. Our ancestors fought bravely against the Turks; and so ought we too, if we would be honest men and good Christians. I allow that a campaign against the Turks can not be half so pleasant as one against the French; but then it must be so much the more beneficial in this world and the next. The swords of the Turks are all set with diamonds.

Just. I would not walk a mile to have my head split with one of their sabres. You will not be so mad as to leave your comfortable little farm!

Wer. Oh! I take that with me. Do you see? The property is sold.

Just. Sold?

Wer. Hist! Here are a hundred ducats, which I received yesterday toward the payment: I am bringing them for the Major.

Just. What is he to do with them?

[1] This refers to an old German custom.

Wer. What is he to do with them? Spend them; play them, or drink them away, or whatever he pleases. He must have money, and it is bad enough that they have made his own so troublesome to him. But I know what I would do, were I in his place. I would say—"The deuce take you all here; I will go with Paul Werner to Persia!" Hang it! Prince Heraclius must have heard of Major von Tellheim, if he has not heard of Paul Werner, his late sergeant. Our affair at Katzenhäuser——

Just. Shall I give you an account of that?

Wer. You give me! I know well that a fine battle array is beyond your comprehension. I am not going to throw my pearls before swine. Here, take the hundred ducats; give them to the Major: tell him, he may keep these for me too. I am going to the market now. I have sent in a couple of loads of rye; what I get for them he can also have.

Just. Werner, you mean it well; but we don't want your money. Keep your ducats; and your hundred pistoles you can also have back safe, as soon as you please.

Wer. What, has the Major money still?

Just. No.

Wer. Has he borrowed any?

Just. No.

Wer. On what does he live then?

Just. We have everything put down in the bill; and when they won't put anything more down, and turn us out of the house, we pledge anything we may happen to have, and go somewhere else. I say, Paul, we must play this landlord here a trick.

Wer. If he has annoyed the Major, I am ready.

Just. What if we watch for him in the evening, when he comes from his club, and give him a good thrashing?

Wer. In the dark! Watch for him! Two to one! No, that won't do.

Just. Or if we burn his house over his head?

Wer. Fire and burn! Why, Just, one hears that you have been baggage-boy and not soldier. Shame!

Just. Or if we ruin his daughter? But she is cursedly ugly.

Wer. She has probably been ruined long ago. At any rate,

you don't want any help there. But what is the matter with you? What has happened?

Just. Just come with me, and you shall hear something to make you stare.

Wer. The devil must be loose here, then?

Just. Just so; come along.

Wer. So much the better! To Persia, then; to Persia.

ACT II

SCENE I.—MINNA'S ROOM

MINNA, FRANZISKA

MINNA. [*In morning dress, looking at her watch.*] Franziska, we have risen very early. The time will hang heavy on our hands.

Fran. Who can sleep in these abominable large towns? The carriages, the watchmen, the drums, the cats, the soldiers, never cease to rattle, to call, to roll, to mew, and to swear; just as if the last thing the night is intended for was for sleep. Have a cup of tea, my lady!

Min. I don't care for tea.

Fran. I will have some chocolate made.

Min. For yourself, if you like.

Fran. For myself! I would as soon talk to myself as drink by myself. Then the time will indeed hang heavy. For very weariness we shall have to make our toilets, and try on the dress in which we intend to make the first attack?

Min. Why do you talk of attacks, when I have only come to require that the capitulation be ratified?

Fran. But the officer whom we have dislodged, and to whom we have apologized, can not be the best-bred man in the world, or he might at least have begged the honour of being allowed to wait upon you.

Min. All officers are not Tellheims. To tell you the truth, I only sent him the message in order to have an opportunity of

inquiring from him about Tellheim. Franziska, my heart tells me my journey will be a successful one and that I shall find him.

Fran. The heart, my lady! One must not trust to that too much. The heart echoes to us the words of our tongues. If the tongue was as much inclined to speak the thoughts of the heart, the fashion of keeping mouths under lock and key would have come in long ago.

Min. Ha! ha! mouths under lock and key! That fashion would just suit me.

Fran. Rather not show the most beautiful set of teeth, than let the heart be seen through them every moment.

Min. What, are you so reserved?

Fran. No, my lady; but I would willingly be more so. People seldom talk of the virtue they possess, and all the more often of that which they do not possess.

Min. Franziska, you made a very just remark there.

Fran. Made! Does one make it, if it occurs to one?

Min. And do you know why I consider it so good? It applies to my Tellheim.

Fran. What would not, in your opinion, apply to him?

Min. Friend and foe say he is the bravest man in the world. But who ever heard him talk of bravery? He has the most upright mind; but uprightness and nobleness of mind are words never on his tongue.

Fran. Of what virtues does he talk, then?

Min. He talks of none, for he is wanting in none.

Fran. That is just what I wished to hear.

Min. Wait, Franziska; I am wrong. He often talks of economy. Between ourselves, I believe he is extravagant.

Fran. One thing more, my lady. I have often heard him mention truth and constancy toward you. What, if he be inconstant?

Min. Miserable girl! But do you mean that seriously?

Fran. How long is it since he wrote to you?

Min. Alas! he has only written to me once since the peace.

Fran. What—A sigh on account of the peace? Surprising! Peace ought only to make good the ill which war causes; but it seems to disturb the good which the latter, its opposite, may

have occasioned. Peace should not be so capricious!—How long have we had peace? The time seems wonderfully long, when there is so little news. It is no use the post going regularly again; nobody writes, for nobody has anything to write about.

Min. "Peace has been made," he wrote to me, "and I am approaching the fulfilment of my wishes." But since he only wrote that to me once, only once——

Fran. And since he compels us to run after this fulfilment of his wishes ourselves— If we can but find him, he shall pay for this! Suppose, in the meantime, he may have accomplished his wishes, and we should learn here that——

Min. [*Anxiously.*] That he is dead?

Fran. To you, my lady; and married to another.

Min. You tease, you! Wait, Franziska, I will pay you out for this! But talk to me, or I shall fall asleep. His regiment was disbanded after the peace. Who knows into what a confusion of bills and papers he may thereby have been brought? Who knows into what other regiment, or to what distant station, he may have been sent? Who knows what circumstances —There's a knock at the door.

Fran. Come in!

SCENE II

LANDLORD, MINNA, FRANZISKA

Land. [*Putting his head in at the door.*] Am I permitted, your ladyship?

Fran. Our landlord?—Come in!

Land. [*A pen behind his ear, a sheet of paper and an inkstand in his hand.*] I am come, your ladyship, to wish you a most humble good-morning. [*To* FRANZISKA.] And the same to you, my pretty maid.

Fran. A polite man!

Min. We are obliged to you.

Fran. And wish you also a good-morning.

Land. May I venture to ask how your ladyship has passed the first night under my poor roof?

Fran. The roof is not so bad, sir; but the beds might have been better.

Land. What do I hear! Not slept well! Perhaps the over-fatigue of the journey——

Min. Perhaps.

Land. Certainly, certainly, for otherwise— Yet, should there be anything not perfectly comfortable, my lady, I hope you will not fail to command me.

Fran. Very well, Mr. Landlord, very well! We are not bashful; and least of all should one be bashful at an inn. We shall not fail to say what we may wish.

Land. I next come to— [*Taking the pen from behind his ear.*

Fran. Well?

Land. Without doubt, my lady, you are already acquainted with the wise regulations of our police.

Min. Not in the least, sir.

Land. We landlords are instructed not to take in any stranger, of whatever rank or sex he may be, for four-and-twenty hours, without delivering, in writing, his name, place of abode, occupation, object of his journey, probable stay, and so on, to the proper authorities.

Min. Very well.

Land. Will your ladyship then be so good——

[*Going to the table, and making ready to write.*

Min. Willingly. My name is——

Land. One minute! [*He writes.*] "Date, 22d August, A.D., etc.; arrived at the King of Spain Hotel." Now your name, my lady.

Min. Fräulein von Barnhelm.

Land. [*Writes.*] "Von Barnhelm." Coming from—where, your ladyship?

Min. From my estate in Saxony.

Land. [*Writes.*] "Estate in Saxony." Saxony! Indeed, indeed! In Saxony, your ladyship? Saxony?

Fran. Well, why not? I hope it is no sin in this country to come from Saxony!

Land. A sin? Heaven forbid! That would be quite a new sin! From Saxony then? Yes, yes, from Saxony, a delightful country, Saxony! But if I am right, your ladyship, Saxony is not small, and has several—how shall I call them?—districts, provinces. Our police are very particular, your ladyship.

Min. I understand. From my estate in Thuringia, then.

Land. From Thuringia! Yes, that is better, your ladyship; that is more exact. [*Writes and reads.*] "Fräulein von Barnhelm, coming from her estate in Thuringia, together with her lady in waiting and two men servants."

Fran. Lady in waiting! That means me, I suppose!

Land. Yes, my pretty maid.

Fran. Well, Mr. Landlord, instead of "lady in waiting," write "maid in waiting." You say, the police are very exact; it might cause a misunderstanding, which might give me trouble some day when my banns are read out. For I really am still unmarried, and my name is Franziska, with the family name of Willig: Franziska Willig. I also come from Thuringia. My father was a miller, on one of my lady's estates. It is called Little Rammsdorf. My brother has the mill now. I was taken very early to the manor, and educated with my lady. We are of the same age—one-and-twenty next Candlemas. I learned everything my lady learned. I should like the police to have a full account of me.

Land. Quite right, my pretty maid; I will bear that in mind, in case of future inquiries.—But now, your ladyship, your business here?

Min. My business here?

Land. Have you any business with His Majesty the King?

Min. Oh! no.

Land. Or at our courts of justice?

Min. No.

Land. Or——

Min. No, no. I have come here solely on account of my own private affairs.

Land. Quite right, your ladyship; but what are those private affairs?

Min. They are—Franziska, I think we are undergoing an examination.

Fran. Mr. Landlord, the police surely do not ask to know a young lady's secrets!

Land. Certainly, my pretty maid; the police wish to know everything, and especially secrets.

Fran. What is to be done, my lady?—Well, listen, Mr. Land-

lord—but take care that it does not go beyond ourselves and the police.

Min. What is the simpleton going to tell him?

Fran. We come to carry off an officer from the king.

Land. How? What? My dear girl!

Fran. Or to let ourselves be carried off by the officer. It is all one.

Min. Franziska, are you mad? The saucy girl is laughing at you.

Land. I hope not! With your humble servant indeed she may jest as much as she pleases; but with the police——

Min. I tell you what; I do not understand how to act in this matter. Suppose you postpone the whole affair till my uncle's arrival. I told you yesterday why he did not come with me. He had an accident to his carriage ten miles from here, and did not wish that I should remain a night longer on the road, so I had to come on. I am sure he will not be more than four-and-twenty hours after us.

Land. Very well, madam, we will wait for him.

Min. He will be able to answer your questions better. He will know to whom, and to what extent, he must give an account of himself—what he must relate respecting his affairs, and what he may withhold.

Land. So much the better! Indeed, one can not expect a young girl [*looking at* Franziska *in a marked manner*] to treat a serious matter with serious people in a serious manner.

Min. And his rooms are in readiness, I hope?

Land. Quite, your ladyship, quite; except the one——

Fran. Out of which, I suppose, you will have to turn some other honourable gentleman!

Land. The waiting maids of Saxony, your ladyship, seem to be very compassionate.

Min. In truth, sir, that was not well done. You ought rather to have refused us.

Land. Why so, your ladyship, why so?

Min. I understand that the officer who was driven out on our account——

Land. Is only a discharged officer, your ladyship.

Min. Well, what then?

Land. Who is almost done for.

Min. So much the worse! He is said to be a very deserving man.

Land. But I tell you he is discharged.

Min. The king can not be acquainted with every deserving man.

Land. Oh! doubtless he knows them; he knows them all.

Min. But he can not reward them all.

Land. They would have been rewarded if they had lived so as to deserve it. But they lived during the war as if it would last forever; as if the words "yours" and "mine" were done away with altogether. Now all the hotels and inns are full of them, and a landlord has to be on his guard with them. I have come off pretty well with this one. If he had no more money, he had at any rate money's worth; and I might indeed have let him remain quiet two or three months longer. However, it is better as it is. By-the-bye, your ladyship, you understand about jewels, I suppose?

Min. Not particularly.

Land. Of course your ladyship must. I must show you a ring—a valuable ring. I see you have a very beautiful one on your finger; and the more I look at it, the more I am astonished at the resemblance it bears to mine. There! just look, just look! [*Taking the ring from its case, and handing it to her.*] What brilliancy! The diamond in the middle alone weighs more than five carats.

Min. [*Looking at it.*] Good heavens! What do I see? This ring——

Land. Is honestly worth fifteen hundred thalers.

Min. Franziska! look!

Land. I did not hesitate for a moment to advance eighty pistoles on it.

Min. Do not you recognise it, Franziska?

Fran. The same! Where did you get that ring, Mr. Landlord?

Land. Come, my girl! you surely have no claim to it?

Fran. We have no claim to this ring! My mistress's monogram must be on it, on the inner side of the setting.—Look at it, my lady.

Min. It is! it is! How did you get this ring?

Land. I! In the most honourable way in the world. You do not wish to bring me into disgrace and trouble, your ladyship! How do I know where the ring properly belongs? During the war many a thing often changed masters, both with and without the knowledge of its owner. War was war. Other rings will have crossed the borders of Saxony. Give it me again, your ladyship; give it me again!

Fran. When you have said from whom you got it.

Land. From a man whom I can not think capable of such things; in other respects a good man——

Min. From the best man under the sun, if you have it from its owner. Bring him here directly! It is himself, or at any rate he must know him.

Land. Who? who, your ladyship?

Fran. Are you deaf? Our Major!

Land. Major! Right! he is a Major, who had this room before you, and from whom I received it.

Min. Major von Tellheim!

Land. Yes, Tellheim. Do you know him?

Min. Do I know him! He is here! Tellheim here! He had this room! He! he pledged this ring with you! What has brought him into this embarrassment? Where is he? Does he owe you anything?—Franziska, my desk here! Open it! [FRANZISKA *puts it on the table and opens it.*]—What does he owe you? To whom else does he owe anything? Bring me all his creditors! Here is gold; here are notes. It is all his!

Land. What is this?

Min. Where is he? Where is he?

Land. An hour ago he was here.

Min. Detested man! how could you act so rudely, so hardly, so cruelly toward him?

Land. Your ladyship must pardon——

Min. Quick! Bring him to me.

Land. His servant is perhaps still here. Does your ladyship wish that he should look for him?

Min. Do I wish it? Begone, run! For this service alone I will forget how badly you have behaved to him.

Fran. Now then, quick, Mr. Landlord! Be off! fly! fly! [*Pushes him out.*

SCENE III

MINNA, FRANZISKA

Min. Now I have found him again, Franziska! Do you hear? Now I have found him again! I scarcely know where I am for joy! Rejoice with me, Franziska. But why should you? And yet you shall; you must rejoice with me. Come, I will make you a present, that you may be able to rejoice with me. Say, Franziska, what shall I give you? Which of my things would please you? What would you like? Take what you will; only rejoice with me. I see you will take nothing. Stop! [*Thrusts her hand into the desk.*] There, Franziska [*gives her money*], buy yourself what you like. Ask for more, if it be not sufficient; but rejoice with me you must. It is so melancholy to be happy alone! There, take it, then.

Fran. It is stealing it from you, my lady. You are intoxicated, quite intoxicated with joy.

Min. Girl, my intoxication is of a quarrelsome kind. Take it, or [*forcing money into her hand*]—and if you thank me—Stay, it is well that I think of it. [*Takes more money from the desk.*] Put that aside, Franziska, for the first poor wounded soldier who accosts us.

SCENE IV

LANDLORD, MINNA, FRANZISKA

Min. Well, is he coming?

Land. The cross, unmannered fellow!

Min. Who?

Land. His servant. He refuses to go for him.

Fran. Bring the rascal here, then. I know all the Major's servants. Which of them was it?

Min. Bring him here directly. When he sees us he will go fast enough. [*Exit* LANDLORD.

SCENE V

MINNA, FRANZISKA

Min. I can not bear this delay. But, Franziska, how cold you are still! Why will you not share my joy with me?

Fran. I would from my heart, if only——

Min. If only what?

Fran. We have found him again. But how have we found him? From all we hear, it must go badly with him. He must be unfortunate. That distresses me.

Min. Distresses you! Let me embrace you for that, my dear playmate! I shall never forget this of you. I am only in love, you are good.

SCENE VI

LANDLORD, JUST, MINNA, FRANZISKA

Land. With great difficulty I have brought him.

Fran. A strange face! I do not know him.

Min. Friend, do you live with Major von Tellheim?

Just. Yes.

Min. Where is your master?

Just. Not here.

Min. But you could find him?

Just. Yes.

Min. Will you fetch him quickly?

Just. No.

Min. You will be doing me a favour.

Just. Indeed!

Min. And your master a service.

Just. Perhaps not.

Min. Why do you suppose that?

Just. You are the strange lady who sent your compliments to him this morning, I think?

Min. Yes.

Just. Then I am right.

Min. Does your master know my name?

Just. No; but he likes over-civil ladies as little as over-uncivil landlords.

Land. That is meant for me, I suppose?

Just. Yes.

Land. Well, do not let the lady suffer for it then; but bring him here directly.

Min. [*To* FRANZISKA.] Franziska, give him something——

Fran. [*Trying to put some money into* JUST'S *hand.*] We do not require your services for nothing.

Just. Nor I your money without services.

Fran. One in return for the other.

Just. I can not. My master has ordered me to pack up. That I am now about, and I beg you not to hinder me further. When I have finished, I will take care to tell him that he may come here. He is close by, at the coffee-house; and if he finds nothing better to do there, I suppose he will come. [*Going.*

Fran. Wait a moment! My lady is the Major's—sister.

Min. Yes, yes, his sister.

Just. I know better; the Major has not a sister. He has sent me twice in six months to his family in Courland. It is true there are different sorts of sisters——

Fran. Insolent!

Just. One must be so to get the people to let one alone. [*Exit.*

Fran. That is a rascal!

Land. So I said. But let him go! I know now where his master is. I will fetch him instantly myself. I only beg your ladyship, most humbly, that you will make an excuse for me to the Major, that I have been so unfortunate as to offend a man of his merit against my will.

Min. Pray go quickly. I will set all that right again. [*Exit* LANDLORD.] Franziska, run after him, and tell him, not to mention my name! [*Exit* FRANZISKA.

SCENE VII

MINNA, *and afterward* FRANZISKA

Min. I have found him again!—Am I alone?—I will not be alone to no purpose.—[*Clasping her hands.*] Yet I am not alone! [*Looking upward.*] One single grateful thought toward heaven is the most perfect prayer! I have found him! [*With outstretched arms.*] I am joyful and happy! What can please the Creator more than a joyful creature! [FRANZISKA *returns.*] Have you returned, Franziska? You pity him! I do not pity him. Misfortune too is useful. Perhaps Heaven deprived him of everything—to give him all again, through me!

Fran. He may be here any moment.—You are still in your morning dress, my lady. Ought you not to dress yourself quickly?

Min. Not at all. He will now see me more frequently so, than dressed out.

Fran. Oh! you know, my lady, how you look best.

Min. [*After a pause.*] Truly, girl, you have hit it again.

Fran. I think women who are beautiful are most so when unadorned.

Min. Must we then be beautiful? Perhaps it is necessary that we should think ourselves so. Enough for me if only I am beautiful in his eyes. Franziska, if all women feel as I now feel, we are—strange things. Tender-hearted, yet proud; virtuous, yet vain; passionate, yet innocent. I dare say you do not understand me. I do not rightly understand myself. Joy turns my head.

Fran. Compose yourself, my lady. I hear footsteps.

Min. Compose myself! What! receive him composedly?

SCENE VIII

Major von Tellheim, Landlord, Minna, Franziska

Maj. T. [*Walks in, and the moment he sees* Minna *rushes toward her.*] Ah! my Minna!

Min. [*Springing toward him.*] Ah! my Tellheim!

Maj. T. [*Starts suddenly, and draws back.*] I beg your pardon, Fräulein von Barnhelm; but to meet you here——

Min. Can not surely be so very unexpected! [*Approaching him, while he draws back still more.*] Am I to pardon you because I am still your Minna? Heaven pardon you, that I am still Fräulein von Barnhelm!

Maj. T. Fräulein——

[*Looks fixedly at the* Landlord, *and shrugs his shoulders.*

Min. [*Sees the* Landlord, *and makes a sign to* Franziska.] Sir——

Maj. T. If we are not both mistaken——

Fran. Why, Landlord, whom have you brought us here? Come, quick, let us go and look for the right man.

Land. Is he not the right one? Surely!

Fran. Surely not! Come, quick! I have not yet wished your daughter good-morning.

Land. Oh! you are very good. [*Still does not stir.*

Fran. [*Takes hold of him.*] Come, and we will make the bill of fare. Let us see what we shall have.

Land. You shall have first of all——

Fran. Stop, I say, stop! If my mistress knows now what she is to have for dinner, it will be all over with her appetite. Come, we must talk that over in private. [*Drags him off.*

SCENE IX

MINNA, MAJOR VON TELLHEIM

Min. Well, are we still both mistaken?

Maj. T. Would to Heaven it were so!—But there is only one Minna, and you are that one.

Min. What ceremony! The world might hear what we have to say to one another.

Maj. T. You here? What do you want here, Madam?

Min. Nothing now. [*Going to him with open arms.*] I have found all that I wanted.

Maj. T. [*Drawing back.*] You seek a prosperous man, and one worthy of your love; and you find—a wretched one.

Min. Then do you love me no longer? Do you love another?

Maj. T. Ah! he never loved you, who could love another afterward.

Min. You draw but one dagger from my breast; for if I have lost your heart, what matters whether indifference or more powerful charms than mine have robbed me of it? You love me no longer; neither do you love another? Wretched man indeed, if you love nothing!

Maj. T. Right; the wretched must love nothing. He merits his misfortunes, if he can not achieve this victory over himself—if he can allow the woman he loves to take part in his misfortune—Oh! how difficult is this victory!—Since reason and necessity have commanded me to forget Minna von Barnhelm, what pains have I taken! I was just beginning to hope that my trouble would not forever be in vain—and you appear.

Min. Do I understand you right? Stop, sir; let us see what we mean, before we make further mistakes. Will you answer me one question?

Maj. T. Any one.

Min. But will you answer me without shift or subterfuge? With nothing but a plain "Yes," or "No"?

Maj. T. I will—If I can.

Min. You can. Well, notwithstanding the pains that you have taken to forget me, do you love me still, Tellheim?

Maj. T. Madam, that question——

Min. You have promised to answer Yes, or No.

Maj. T. And added, if I can.

Min. You can. You must know what passes in your heart. Do you love me still, Tellheim? Yes, or No?

Maj. T. If my heart——

Min. Yes, or No?

Maj. T. Well, Yes!

Min. Yes?

Maj. T. Yes, yes! Yet——

Min. Patience! You love me still; that is enough for me. Into what a mood have we fallen! an unpleasant, melancholy, infectious mood! I assume my own again. Now, my dear unfortunate, you love me still, and have your Minna still, and you are unhappy? Hear what a conceited, foolish thing your Minna was—is. She allowed—allows herself, to imagine that she makes your whole happiness. Declare all your misery at once. She would like to try how far she can outweigh it.—Well?

Maj. T. Madam, I am not accustomed to complain.

Min. Very well. I know nothing in a soldier, after boasting, that pleases me less than complaining. But there is a certain cold, careless way of speaking of bravery and misfortune——

Maj. T. Which at the bottom is still boasting and complaining.

Min. You disputant! You should not have called yourself unhappy at all, then. You should have told the whole, or kept quiet. Reason and necessity commanded you to forget me? I am a great stickler for reason; I have a great respect for necessity. But let me hear how reasonable this reason, and how necessary this necessity may be.

Maj. T. Listen then, Madam. You call me Tellheim; the

name is correct. But you suppose I am that Tellheim whom you knew at home; the prosperous man, full of just pretensions, with a thirst for glory; the master of all his faculties, both of body and mind; before whom the lists of honour and prosperity stood open; who, if he was not then worthy of your heart and your hand, dared to hope that he might daily become more nearly so. This Tellheim I am now, as little as I am my own father. They both have been. Now I am Tellheim the discharged, the suspected, the cripple, the beggar. To the former, Madam, you promised your hand; do you wish to keep your word?

Min. That sounds very tragic.—Yet, Major Tellheim, until I find the former one again—I am quite foolish about the Tellheims—the latter will have to help me in my dilemma. Your hand, dear beggar! [*Taking his hand.*

Maj. T. [*Holding his hat before his face with the other hand, and turning away from her.*] This is too much!—What am I?—Let me go, Madam. Your kindness tortures me! Let me go.

Min. What is the matter? Where would you go?

Maj. T. From you!

Min. From me? [*Drawing his hand to her heart.*] Dreamer!

Maj. T. Despair will lay me dead at your feet.

Min. From me?

Maj. T. From you. Never, never to see you again. Or at least determined, fully determined, never to be guilty of a mean action; never to cause you to commit an imprudent one. Let me go, Minna. [*Tears himself away, and Exit.*

Min. [*Calling after him.*] Let you go, Minna? Minna, let you go? Tellheim! Tellheim!

ACT III

SCENE I.—THE PARLOUR

Just [*With a letter in his hand*]

JUST. Must I come again into this cursed house! A note from my master to her ladyship that would be his sister. I hope nothing will come of this, or else there will be no end to letter-carrying. I should like to be rid of it; but yet I don't wish to go into the room. The women ask so many questions, and I hate answering.—Ah! the door opens. Just what I wanted, the waiting puss!

SCENE II

Franziska, Just

Fran. [*Calling through the door by which she has just entered.*] Fear not; I will watch. See! [*Observing* Just.] I have met with something immediately. But nothing is to be done with that brute.

Just. Your servant.

Fran. I should not like such a servant.

Just. Well, well, pardon the expression! There is a note from my master to your mistress—her ladyship—his sister, wasn't it?—sister.

Fran. Give it me! [*Snatches it from his hand.*

Just. You will be so good, my master begs, as to deliver it. Afterward you will be so good, my master begs, as not to think I ask for anything!

Fran. Well?

Just. My master understands how to manage the affair. He knows that the way to the young lady is through her maid, methinks. The maid will therefore be so good, my master begs, as to let him know whether he may not have the pleasure of speaking with the maid for a quarter of an hour.

Fran. With me?

Just. Pardon me, if I do not give you your right title. Yes, with you. Only for one quarter of an hour; but alone, quite

alone, in private, tête-à-tête. He has something very particular to say to you.

Fran. Very well! I have also much to say to him. He may come; I shall be at his service.

Just. But when can he come? When is it most convenient for you, young woman? In the evening?

Fran. What do you mean? Your master can come when he pleases; and now be off.

Just. Most willingly! [*Going.*

Fran. I say! one word more! Where are the rest of the Major's servants?

Just. The rest? Here, there, and everywhere.

Fran. Where is William?

Just. The valet? He has let him go for a trip.

Fran. Oh! and Philip, where is he?

Just. The huntsman? Master has found him a good place.

Fran. Because he does not hunt now, of course. But Martin?

Just. The coachman? He is off on a ride.

Fran. And Fritz?

Just. The footman? He is promoted.

Fran. Where were you then, when the Major was quartered in Thuringia with us that winter? You were not with him, I suppose!

Just. Oh! yes, I was groom; but I was in the hospital.

Fran. Groom! and now you are——

Just. All in all; valet and huntsman, footman and groom.

Fran. Well, I never! To turn away so many good, excellent servants, and to keep the very worst of all! I should like to know what your master finds in you!

Just. Perhaps he finds that I am an honest fellow.

Fran. Oh! one is precious little if one is nothing more than honest. William was another sort of a man! So your master has let him go for a trip?

Just. Yes, he—let him—because he could not prevent him.

Fran. How so?

Just. Oh! William will do well on his travels. He took master's wardrobe with him.

Fran. What! he did not run away with it?

Just. I can not say that exactly; but when we left Nürnberg, he did not follow us with it.

Fran. Oh! the rascal!

Just. He was the right sort! he could curl hair and shave—and chatter—and flirt—couldn't he?

Fran. At any rate, I would not have turned away the huntsman, had I been in the Major's place. If he did not want him any longer as huntsman, he was still a useful fellow. Where has he found him a place?

Just. With the Commandant of Spandau.

Fran. The fortress! There can not be much hunting within the walls either.

Just. Oh! Philip does not hunt there.

Fran. What does he do then?

Just. He rides—on the treadmill.

Fran. The treadmill!

Just. But only for three years. He made a bit of a plot among master's company, to get six men through the outposts.

Fran. I am astonished; the knave!

Just. Ah! he was a useful fellow; a huntsman who knew all the foot-paths and by-ways for fifty miles round, through forests and bogs. And he could shoot!

Fran. It is lucky the Major has still got the honest coachman.

Just. Has he got him still?

Fran. I thought you said Martin was off on a ride: of course he will come back!

Just. Do you think so?

Fran. Well, where has he ridden to?

Just. It is now going on for ten weeks since he rode master's last and only horse—to water.

Fran. And has not he come back yet? Oh! the rascal!

Just. The water may have washed the honest coachman away. Oh! he was a famous coachman! He had driven ten years in Vienna. My master will never get such another again. When the horses were in full gallop, he only had to say "Wo!" and there they stood, like a wall. Moreover, he was a finished horse-doctor!

Fran. I begin now to be anxious about the footman's promotion.

Just. No, no; there is no occasion for that. He has become a drummer in a garrison regiment.

Fran. I thought as much!

Just. Fritz chummed up with a scamp, never came home at night, made debts everywhere in master's name, and a thousand rascally tricks. In short, the Major saw that he was determined to rise in the world [*pantomimically imitating the act of hanging*], so he put him in the right road.

Fran. Oh! the stupid!

Just. Yet a perfect footman, there is no doubt of that. In running, my master could not catch him on his best horse if he gave him fifty paces; but on the other hand, Fritz could give the gallows a thousand paces, and, I bet my life, he would overhaul it. They were all great friends of yours, eh, young woman?—William and Philip, Martin and Fritz! Now, Just wishes you good-day. [*Exit.*

SCENE III

FRANZISKA, *and afterward the* LANDLORD

Fran. [*Looking after him seriously.*] I deserve the hit! Thank you, Just. I undervalued honesty. I will not forget the lesson. Ah! our unfortunate Major!

[*Turns round to enter her mistress's room, when the* LANDLORD *comes.*

Land. Wait a bit, my pretty maid.

Fran. I have not time now, Mr. Landlord.

Land. Only half a moment! No further tidings of the Major? That surely could not possibly be his leave-taking!

Fran. What could not?

Land. Has not her ladyship told you? When I left you, my pretty maid, below in the kitchen, I returned accidentally into this room——

Fran. Accidentally—with a view to listen a little.

Land. What, girl! how can you suspect me of that? There is nothing so bad in a landlord as curiosity. I had not been here long, when suddenly her ladyship's door burst open: the Major dashed out; the lady after him; both in such a state of

excitement; with looks—in attitudes—that must be seen to be understood. She seized hold of him; he tore himself away; she seized him again—"Tellheim." "Let me go, Madam." "Where?" Thus he drew her as far as the staircase. I was really afraid he would drag her down; but he got away. The lady remained on the top step; looked after him; called after him; wrung her hands. Suddenly she turned round; ran to the window; from the window to the staircase again; from the staircase into the room, backward and forward. There I stood; she passed me three times without seeing me. At length it seemed as if she saw me; but Heaven defend us! I believe the lady took me for you. "Franziska," she cried, with her eyes fixed upon me, "am I happy now?" Then she looked straight up to the ceiling, and said again, "Am I happy now?" Then she wiped the tears from her eyes, and smiled, and asked me again, "Franziska, am I happy now?" I really felt, I know not how. Then she ran to the door of her room, and turned round again toward me, saying, "Come, Franziska, whom do you pity now?" and with that she went in.

Fran. Oh! Mr. Landlord, you dreamed that.

Land. Dreamed! No, my pretty maid; one does not dream so minutely. Yes, what would not I give—I am not curious: but what would not I give—to have the key to it!

Fran. The key? Of our door? Mr. Landlord, that is inside; we take it in at night; we are timid.

Land. Not that sort of key; I mean, my dear girl, the key—the explanation, as it were; the precise connection of all that I have seen.

Fran. Indeed! Well, good-bye, Mr. Landlord. Shall we have dinner soon?

Land. My dear girl, not to forget what I came to say——

Fran. Well? In as few words as possible.

Land. Her ladyship has my ring still. I call it mine——

Fran. You shall not lose it.

Land. I have no fear on that account: I merely put you in mind. Do you see, I do not wish to have it again at all. I can guess pretty well how she knew the ring, and why it was so like her own. It is best in her hands. I do not want it any

more; and I can put them down—the hundred pistoles which I advanced for it, to the lady's bill. Will not that do, my pretty maid?

SCENE IV

PAUL WERNER, LANDLORD, FRANZISKA

Wer. There he is!

Fran. A hundred pistoles? I thought it was only eighty.

Land. True, only ninety, only ninety. I will do so, my pretty maid, I will do so.

Fran. All that will come right, Mr. Landlord.

Wer. [*Coming from behind, and tapping* FRANZISKA *on the shoulder.*] Little woman—little woman.

Fran. [*Frightened.*] Oh! dear!

Wer. Don't be alarmed! I see you are pretty, and a stranger, too. And strangers who are pretty must be warned. Little woman! little woman! I advise you to beware of that fellow! [*Pointing to the* LANDLORD.

Land. Ah! What an unexpected pleasure! Herr Werner! Welcome, welcome! Yes, you are just the same jovial, joking, honest Werner!—So you are to beware of me, my pretty maid. Ha! ha! ha!

Wer. Keep out of his way everywhere!

Land. My way? Am I such a dangerous man? Ha! ha! ha!—Hear him, my pretty maid! A good joke, isn't it?

Wer. People like him always call it a joke, if one tells them the truth.

Land. The truth. Ha! ha! ha! Better and better, my pretty maid, isn't it? He knows how to joke! I dangerous? I? Twenty years ago there might have been something in it. Yes, yes, my pretty maid, then I was a dangerous man; many a one knew it; but now——

Wer. Oh! the old fool!

Land. There it is! When we get old, danger is at an end! It will be so with you too, Herr Werner!

Wer. You utter old fool!—Little woman, you will give me credit for enough common sense not to speak of danger from him. That one devil has left him, but seven others have entered into him.

Land. Oh! hear him! How cleverly he can turn things about! Joke upon joke, and always something new! Ah! he is an excellent man, Paul Werner is. [*To* Franziska, *as if whispering.*] A well-to-do man, and a bachelor still. He has a nice little freehold three miles from here. He made prize-money in the war, and was a sergeant to the Major. Yes, he is a real friend of the Major's; he is a friend who would give his life for him.

Wer. Yes; and that is a friend of the Major's—that is a friend—whose life the Major ought to take. [*Pointing to the* Landlord.]

Land. How! What! No, Herr Werner, that is not a good joke. I no friend to the Major! I don't understand that joke.

Wer. Just has told me pretty things.

Land. Just! Ah! I thought Just was speaking through you. Just is a nasty, ill-natured man. But here on the spot stands a pretty maid—she can speak, she can say if I am no friend of the Major's—if I have not done him good service. And why should not I be his friend? Is not he a deserving man? It is true, he has had the misfortune to be discharged; but what of that? The king can not be acquainted with all deserving officers; and if he knew them, he could not reward them all.

Wer. Heaven put those words into your mouth. But Just —certainly there is nothing remarkable about Just, but still Just is no liar; and if what he has told me be true——

Land. I don't want to hear anything about Just. As I said, this pretty maid here can speak. [*Whispering to her.*]—You know, my dear; the ring! Tell Herr Werner about it. Then he will learn better what I am. And that it may not appear as if she only said what I wish, I will not even be present.—I will go; but you shall tell me after, Herr Werner, you shall tell me, whether Just is not a foul slanderer. [*Exit.*

SCENE V

PAUL WERNER, FRANZISKA

Wer. Little woman, do you know my Major?

Fran. Major von Tellheim? Yes, indeed, I do know that good man.

Wer. Is he not a good man? Do you like him?

Fran. From the bottom of my heart.

Wer. Indeed! I tell you what, little woman, you are twice as pretty now as you were before. But what are the services which the landlord says he has rendered our Major?

Fran. That is what I don't know; unless he wished to take credit to himself for the good result which fortunately has arisen from his knavish conduct.

Wer. Then what Just told me is true? [*Toward the side where the* LANDLORD *went off.*] A lucky thing for you that you are gone! He did really turn him out of his room?—To treat such a man so, because the donkey fancied that he had no more money! The Major no money!

Fran. What! has the Major any money?

Wer. By the load. He doesn't know how much he has. He doesn't know who is in his debt. I am his debtor, and have brought him some old arrears. Look, little woman, in this purse [*drawing it out of one pocket*] are a hundred louis d'ors; and in this packet [*drawing it out of another pocket*] a hundred ducats. All his money!

Fran. Really! Why then does the Major pawn his things? He pledged a ring, you know——

Wer. Pledged! Don't you believe it. Perhaps he wanted to get rid of the rubbish.

Fran. It is no rubbish; it is a very valuable ring; which, moreover, I suspect, he received from a loving hand.

Wer. That will be the reason. From a loving hand! Yes, yes; such a thing often puts one in mind of what one does not wish to remember, and therefore one gets rid of it.

Fran. What!

Wer. Odd things happen to the soldier in winter quarters. He has nothing to do then, so he amuses himself, and to pass the time he makes acquaintances, which he only intends for

the winter, but which the good soul with whom he makes them, looks upon for life. Then, presto! a ring is suddenly conjured on to his finger; he hardly knows himself how it gets there; and very often he would willingly give the finger with it, if he could only get free from it again.

Fran. Oh! and do you think this has happened to the Major?

Wer. Undoubtedly. Especially in Saxony. If he had had ten fingers on each hand, he might have had all twenty full of rings.

Fran. [*Aside.*] That sounds important, and deserves to be inquired into. Mr. Freeholder, or Mr. Sergeant——

Wer. Little woman, if it makes no difference to you, I like "Mr. Sergeant" best.

Fran. Well, Mr. Sergeant, I have a note from the Major to my mistress. I will carry it in, and be here again in a moment. Will you be so good as to wait? I should like very much to have a little talk with you.

Wer. Are you fond of talking, little woman? Well, with all my heart. Go quickly. I am fond of talking too; I will wait.

Fran. Yes, please wait. [*Exit.*

SCENE VI

Paul Werner

Wer. That is not at all a bad little woman. But I ought not to have promised her that I would wait, for it would be most to the purpose, I suppose, to find the Major. He will not have my money, but rather pawns his property. That is just his way. A little trick occurs to me. When I was in the town, a fortnight back, I paid a visit to Captain Marloff's widow. The poor woman was ill, and was lamenting that her husband had died in debt to the Major for four hundred thalers, which she did not know how to pay. I went to see her again to-day; I intended to tell her that I could lend her five hundred thalers, when I had received the money for my property; for I must put some of it by, if I do not go to Persia. But she was gone; and no doubt she has not been able to pay the Major. Yes,

I'll do that; and the sooner the better. The little woman must not take it ill of me; I can not wait.

[*Is going, thoughtfully, and almost runs against the* MAJOR, *who meets him.*

SCENE VII

MAJOR VON TELLHEIM, PAUL WERNER

Maj. T. Why so thoughtful, Werner?

Wer. Oh! that is you. I was just going to pay you a visit in your new quarters, Major.

Maj. T. To fill my ears with curses against the Landlord of my old one. Do not remind me of it.

Wer. I should have done that by the way; yes. But more particularly, I wished to thank you for having been so good as to take care of my hundred louis d'ors. Just has given them to me again. I should have been very glad if you would have kept them longer for me. But you have got into new quarters, which neither you nor I know much about. Who knows what sort of place it is? They might be stolen, and you would have to make them good to me; there would be no help for it. So I can not ask you to take them again.

Maj. T. [*Smiling.*] When did you begin to be so careful, Werner?

Wer. One learns to be so. One can not now be careful enough of one's money. I have also a commission for you, Major, from Frau Marloff; I have just come from her. Her husband died four hundred thalers in your debt; she sends you a hundred ducats here, in part payment. She will forward you the rest next week. I believe I am the cause that she has not sent you the whole sum. For she also owed me about eighty thalers, and she thought I was come to dun her for them—which, perhaps, was the fact—so she gave them me out of the roll which she had put aside for you. You can spare your hundred thalers for a week longer, better than I can spare my few groschens. There, take it! [*Hands him the ducats.*

Maj. T. Werner!

Wer. Well! Why do you stare at me so? Take it, Major!

Maj. T. Werner!

Wer. What is the matter with you? What annoys you?

Maj. T. [*Angrily striking his forehead, and stamping with his foot.*] That—the four hundred thalers are not all there.

Wer. Come! Major, did not you understand me?

Maj. T. It is because I did understand you! Alas, that the best men should to-day distress me most!

Wer. What do you say?

Maj. T. This only applies partly to you. Go, Werner! [*Pushing back* WERNER'S *hand with the money in it.*

Wer. As soon as I have got rid of this.

Maj. T. Werner, suppose I tell you that Frau Marloff was here herself early this morning——

Wer. Indeed?

Maj. T. That she owes me nothing now——

Wer. Really?

Maj. T. That she has paid me every penny— What will you say then?

Wer. [*Thinks for a minute.*] I shall say that I have told a lie, and that lying is a low thing, because one may be caught at it.

Maj. T. And you will be ashamed of yourself?

Wer. And what of him who compels me to lie? Should not he be ashamed too? Look ye, Major; if I was to say that your conduct has not vexed me, I should tell another lie, and I won't lie any more.

Maj. T. Do not be annoyed, Werner. I know your heart, and your affection for me. But I do not require your money.

Wer. Not require it! Rather sell, rather pawn, and get talked about!

Maj. T. Oh! people may know that I have nothing more. One must not wish to appear richer than one is.

Wer. But why poorer? A man has something as long as his friend has.

Maj. T. It is not proper that I should be your debtor.

Wer. Not proper! On that summer day which the sun and the enemy made hot for us, when your groom, who had your canteen, was not to be found, and you came to me and said, "Werner have you nothing to drink?" and I gave you my flask, you took it and drank, did you not? Was that proper? Upon my life, a mouthful of dirty water at that time was often worth more than such filth. [*Taking the purse also out of his*

pocket, and holding out both to him.] Take them, dear Major! Fancy it is water. God has made this, too, for all.

Maj. T. You torment me: don't you hear? I will not be your debtor.

Wer. At first, it was not proper; now you will not. Ah! that is a different thing. [*Rather angrily.*] You will not be my debtor? But suppose you are already, Major? Or, are you not a debtor to the man who once warded off the blow that was meant to split your head; and, at another time, knocked off the arm which was just going to pull and send a ball through your breast? How can you become a greater debtor to that man? Or, is my neck of less consequence than my money? If that is a noble way of thinking, by my soul it is a very silly one too!

Maj. T. To whom do you say that, Werner? We are alone, and therefore I may speak; if a third person heard us, it might sound like boasting. I acknowledge with pleasure that I have to thank you for twice saving my life. Do you not think, friend, that if an opportunity occurred I would have done as much for you, eh?

Wer. If an opportunity occurred! Who doubts it, Major? Have I not seen you risk your life a hundred times for the lowest soldier, when he was in danger?

Maj. T. Well!

Wer. But——

Maj. T. Why can not you understand me? I say, it is not proper that I should be your debtor; I will not be your debtor. That is, not in the circumstances in which I now am.

Wer. Oh! so you would wait till better times. You will borrow money from me another time, when you do not want any; when you have some yourself, and I perhaps none.

Maj. T. A man ought not to borrow, when he has not the means of repaying.

Wer. A man like yourself can not always be in want.

Maj. T. You know the world— Least of all should a man borrow from one who wants his money himself.

Wer. Oh! yes; I am such a one! Pray, what do I want it for? When they want a sergeant, they give him enough to live on,

Maj. T. You want it, to become something more than a sergeant—to be able to get forward in that path in which even the most deserving, without money, may remain behind.

Wer. To become something more than a sergeant! I do not think of that. I am a good sergeant; I might easily make a bad captain, and certainly a worse general.

Maj. T. Do not force me to think ill of you, Werner! I was very sorry to hear what Just has told me. You have sold your farm, and wish to rove about again. Do not let me suppose that you do not love the profession of arms so much as the wild, dissolute way of living which is unfortunately connected with it. A man should be a soldier for his own country, or from love of the cause for which he fights. To serve without any purpose—to-day here, to-morrow there—is only travelling about like a butcher's apprentice, nothing more.

Wer. Well, then, Major, I will do as you say. You know better what is right. I will remain with you. But, dear Major, do take my money in the meantime. Sooner or later your affairs must be settled. You will get money in plenty then; and then you shall repay me with interest. I only do it for the sake of the interest.

Maj. T. Do not talk of it.

Wer. Upon my life, I only do it for the sake of the interest. Many a time I have thought to myself: "Werner, what will become of you in your old age? when you are crippled? when you will have nothing in the world? when you will be obliged to go and beg!" And then I thought again: "No, you will not be obliged to beg; you will go to Major Tellheim; he will share his last penny with you; he will feed you till you die; and with him you can die like an honest fellow."

Maj. T. [*Taking* Werner's *hand.*] And, comrade, you do not think so still?

Wer. No, I do not think so any longer. He who will not take anything from me, when he is in want, and I have to give, will not give me anything when he has to give, and I am in want. So be it. [*Is going.*

Maj. T. Man, do not drive me mad! Where are you going? [*Detains him.*] If I assure you now, upon my honour, that I still have money—if I assure you, upon my honour, that I

will tell you when I have no more—that you shall be the first and only person from whom I will borrow anything—will that content you?

Wer. I suppose it must. Give me your hand on it, Major.

Maj. T. There, Paul! And now enough of that. I came here to speak with a certain young woman.

SCENE VIII

FRANZISKA [*coming out of* MINNA'S *room*], MAJOR VON TELLHEIM, PAUL WERNER

Fran. [*Entering.*] Are you there still, Mr. Sergeant? [*Seeing* TELLHEIM.] And you there too, Major? I will be at your service instantly. [*Goes back quickly into the room.*

SCENE IX

MAJOR VON TELLHEIM, PAUL WERNER

Maj. T. That was she! But it seems you know her, Werner.

Wer. Yes, I know her.

Maj. T. Yet, if I remember rightly, when I was in Thuringia you were not with me.

Wer. No; I was seeing after the uniforms in Leipsig.

Maj. T. Where did you make her acquaintance, then?

Wer. Our acquaintance is very young. Not a day old. But young friendship is warm.

Maj. T. Have you seen her mistress, too?

Wer. Is her mistress a young lady? She told me you are acquainted with her mistress.

Maj. T. Did not you hear? She comes from Thuringia.

Wer. Is the lady young?

Maj. T. Yes.

Wer. Pretty?

Maj. T. Very pretty.

Wer. Rich?

Maj. T. Very rich.

Wer. Is the mistress as fond of you as the maid is? That would be capital!

Maj. T. What do you mean?

SCENE X

Franziska [*with a letter in her hand*], Major von Tellheim, Paul Werner

Fran. Major——

Maj. T. Franziska, I have not yet been able to give you a "Welcome" here.

Fran. In thought, I am sure that you have done it. I know you are friendly to me; so am I to you. But it is not at all kind to vex those who are friendly to you so much.

Wer. [*Aside.*] Ah! now I see it. It is so!

Maj. T. My destiny, Franziska! Did you give her the letter?

Fran. Yes; and here I bring you— [*Holding out a letter.*

Maj. T. An answer!

Fran. No, your own letter again.

Maj. T. What! She will not read it!

Fran. She would have liked, but—we can't read writing well.

Maj. T. You are joking!

Fran. And we think that writing was not invented for those who can converse with their lips whenever they please.

Maj. T. What an excuse! She must read it. It contains my justification—all the grounds and reasons——

Fran. My mistress wishes to hear them all from you yourself, not to read them.

Maj. T. Hear them from me myself! That every look, every word of hers, may embarrass me; that I may feel in every glance the greatness of my loss.

Fran. Without any pity! Take it. [*Giving him his letter.* She expects you at three o'clock. She wishes to drive out and see the town; you must accompany her.

Maj. T. Accompany her!

Fran. And what will you give me to let you drive out by yourselves? I shall remain at home.

Maj. T. By ourselves!

Fran. In a nice close carriage.

Maj. T. Impossible!

Fran. Yes, yes, in the carriage, Major. You will have to

submit quietly; you can not escape there! And that is the reason. In short, you will come, Major, and punctually at three— Well, you wanted to speak to me too alone. What have you to say to me? Oh! we are not alone.

[*Looking at* WERNER.

Maj. T. Yes, Franziska; as good as alone. But as your mistress has not read my letter, I have nothing now to say to you.

Fran. As good as alone! Then you have no secrets from the Sergeant?

Maj. T. No, none.

Fran. And yet I think you should have some from him.

Maj. T. Why so?

Wer. How so, little woman?

Fran. Particularly secrets of a certain kind— All twenty, Mr. Sergeant! [*Holding up both her hands, with open fingers.*

Wer. Hist! hist! girl.

Maj. T. What is the meaning of that?

Fran. Presto! conjured on to his finger, Mr. Sergeant.

[*As if she was putting a ring on her finger.*

Maj. T. What are you talking about?

Wer. Little woman, little woman, don't you understand a joke?

Maj. T. Werner, you have not forgotten, I hope, what I have often told you: that one should not jest beyond a certain point with a young woman!

Wer. Upon my life I may have forgotten it!—Little woman, I beg——

Fran. Well, if it was a joke, I will forgive you this once.

Maj. T. Well, if I must come, Franziska, see that your mistress reads my letter beforehand? That will spare me the pain of thinking again—of talking again, of things which I would willingly forget. There, give it to her! [*He turns the letter in giving it to her, and sees that it has been opened.*] But do I see aright? Why, it has been opened!

Fran. That may be. [*Looks at it.*] True, it is open. Who can have opened it? But really we have not read it, Major; really not. And we do not wish to read it, because the writer is coming himself. Come; and I tell you what, Major! don't

come as you are now—in boots, and with such a head. You are excusable, you do not expect us. Come in shoes, and have your hair fresh dressed. You look too soldierlike, too Prussian for me as you are.

Maj. T. Thank you, Franziska.

Fran. You look as if you had been bivouacking last night.

Maj. T. You may have guessed right.

Fran. We are going to dress, directly too, and then have dinner. We would willingly ask you to dinner, but your presence might hinder our eating; and observe, we are not so much in love that we have lost our appetites.

Maj. T. I will go. Prepare her somewhat, Franziska, beforehand, that I may not become contemptible in her eyes, and in my own.—Come, Werner, you shall dine with me.

Wer. At the table d'hôte here in the house? I could not eat a bit there.

Maj. T. With me, in my room.

Wer. I will follow you directly. One word first with the little woman.

Maj. T. I have no objection to that. [*Exit.*

SCENE XI

Paul Werner, Franziska

Fran. Well, Mr. Sergeant!

Wer. Little woman, if I come again, shall I too come smartened up a bit?

Fran. Come as you please; my eyes will find no fault with you. But my ears will have to be so much the more on their guard. Twenty fingers, all full of rings. Ah! ah! Mr. Sergeant!

Wer. No, little woman; that is just what I wished to say to you. I only rattled on a little. There is nothing in it. One ring is quite enough for a man. Hundreds and hundreds of times I have heard the Major say, "He must be a rascally soldier who can mislead a young girl." So think I too, little woman. You may trust to that! I must be quick and follow him. A good appetite to you! [*Exit.*

Fran. The same to you! I really believe I like that man! [*Going in, she meets* Minna *coming out.*

SCENE XII

MINNA, FRANZISKA

Min. Has the Major gone already, Franziska? I believe I should have been sufficiently composed again now to have detained him here.

Fran. And I will make you still more composed.

Min. So much the better! His letter! oh! his letter! Each line spoke the honourable, noble man. Each refusal to accept my hand declared his love for me. I suppose he noticed that we had read his letter. I don't mind that, if he does but come. But are you sure he will come? There only seems to me to be a little too much pride in his conduct. For not to be willing to be indebted for his good fortune, even to the woman he loves, is pride, unpardonable pride! If he shows me too much of this, Franziska——

Fran. You will discard him!

Min. See there! Do you begin to pity him again already? No, silly girl, a man is never discarded for a single fault. No; but I have thought of a trick—to pay him off a little for this pride, with pride of the same kind.

Fran. Indeed, you must be very composed, my lady, if you are thinking of tricks again.

Min. I am so; come. You will have a part to play in my plot. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV

SCENE I.—MINNA'S ROOM

MINNA [*dressed handsomely and richly, but in good taste*], FRANZISKA

[*They have just risen from a table, which a servant is clearing.*]

FRANZISKA. You can not possibly have eaten enough, my lady.

Min. Don't you think so, Franziska? Perhaps I had no appetite when I sat down.

Fran. We had agreed not to mention him during dinner. We should have resolved likewise not to think of him.

Min. Indeed, I have thought of nothing but him.

Fran. So I perceived. I began to speak of a hundred different things, and you made wrong answers to each. [*Another servant brings coffee.*] Here comes a beverage more suited to fancies—sweet, melancholy coffee.

Min. Fancies! I have none. I am only thinking of the lesson I will give him. Did you understand my plan, Franziska?

Fran. Oh! yes; but it would be better if he spared us the putting it in execution.

Min. You will see that I know him thoroughly. He who refuses me now with all my wealth, will contend for me against the whole world, as soon as he hears that I am unfortunate and friendless.

Fran. [*Seriously.*] That must tickle the most refined self-love.

Min. You moralist! First you convict me of vanity—now of self-love. Let me do as I please, Franziska. You, too, shall do as you please with your Sergeant.

Fran. With my Sergeant?

Min. Yes. If you deny it altogether, then it is true. I have not seen him yet; but from all you have said respecting him, I foretell your husband for you.

SCENE II

Riccaut de la Marlinière, Minna, Franziska

Ric. [*Before he enters.*] Est-il permis, Monsieur le Major?

Fran. Who is that? Any one for us? [*Going to the door.*

Ric. Parbleu! I am wrong. Mais non—I am not wrong. C'est la chambre——

Fran. Without doubt, my lady, this gentleman expects to find Major von Tellheim here still.

Ric. Oui, dat is it! Le Major de Tellheim; juste, ma belle enfant, c'est lui que je cherche. Où est-il?

Fran. He does not lodge here any longer.

Ric. Comment? Dere is four-and-twenty hour ago he did lodge here, and not lodge here any more? Where lodge he den?

Min. [*Going up to him.*] Sir——

Ric. Ah! Madame, Mademoiselle, pardon, lady.

Min. Sir, your mistake is quite excusable, and your astonishment very natural. Major von Tellheim has had the kindness to give up his apartments to me, as a stranger, who was not able to get them elsewhere.

Ric. Ah! voilà de ses politesses! C'est un très-galant homme que ce Major!

Min. Where has he gone now?—truly I am ashamed that I do not know.

Ric. Madame not know? C'est dommage; j'en suis fâché.

Min. I certainly ought to have inquired. Of course his friends will seek him here.

Ric. I am vary great his friend, Madame.

Min. Franziska, do you not know?

Fran. No, my lady.

Ric. It is vary nécessaire dat I speak him. I come and bring him a nouvelle, of which he will be vary much at ease.

Min. I regret it so much the more. But I hope to see him perhaps shortly. If it is a matter of indifference from whom he hears this good news, I would offer, sir——

Ric. I comprehend. Mademoiselle parle français? Mais sans doute; telle que je la vois! La demande était bien impolie; vous me pardonnerez, Mademoiselle.

Min. Sir——

Ric. No! You not speak French, Madame?

Min. Sir, in France I would endeavour to do so; but why here? I perceive that you understand me, sir; and I, sir, shall doubtless understand you; speak as you please.

Ric. Good, good! I can also explain me in your langue. Sachez donc, Mademoiselle, you must know, Madame, dat I come from de table of de ministre, ministre de, ministre de—What is le ministre out dere, in de long street, on de broad place?

Min. I am a perfect stranger here.

Ric. Si, le ministre of de war departement. Dere I have eat my dinner; I ordinary dine dere, and de conversation did fall on Major Tellheim; et le ministre m'a dit en confidence, car Son Excellence est de mes amis, et il n'y a point de mystères entre nous; Son Excellence, I say, has trust to me, dat l'affaire

from our Major is on de point to end, and to end good. He has made a rapport to de king, and de king has resolved et tout à fait en faveur du Major. "Monsieur," m'a dit Son Excellence, "vous comprenez bien, que tout dépend de la manière, dont on fait envisager les choses au roi, et vous me connaissez. Cela fait un très-joli garçon que ce Tellheim, et ne sais-je pas que vous l'aimez? Les amis de mes amis sont aussi les miens. Il coûte un peu cher au Roi ce Tellheim, mais est-ce que l'on sert les rois pour rien? Il faut s'entr'aider en ce monde; et quand il s'agit de pertes, que ce soit le Roi qui en fasse, et non pas un honnête homme de nous autres. Voilà le principe, dont je ne me dépars jamais." But what say Madame to it? N'est pas, dat is a fine fellow? Ah! que Son Excellence a le cœur bien placé! He assure me au reste, if de Major has not reçu already une lettre de la main—a royal letter, dat to-day infailliblement must he receive one.

Min. Certainly, sir, this news will be most welcome to Major von Tellheim. I should like to be able to name the friend to him who takes such an interest in his welfare.

Ric. Madame, you wish my name? Vous voyez en moi—you see, lady, in me, le Chevalier Riccaut de la Marlinière, Seigneur de Prêt-au-val, de la branche de Prens d'or. You remain astonished to hear me from so great, great a family, qui est véritablement du sang royal. Il faut le dire; je suis sans doute le cadet le plus aventureux que la maison n'a jamais eu. I serve from my eleven year. Une affaire d'honneur make me flee. Den I serve de holy Papa of Rome, den de Republic St. Marino, den de Poles, den de States General, till enfin I am brought here. Ah! Mademoiselle, que je voudrais n'avoir jamais vu ce pays-ci. Had one left me in de service of de States General, should I be now at least colonel. But here always to remain capitaine, and now also a discharged capitaine.

Min. That is ill luck.

Ric. Oui, Mademoiselle, me voilà réformé, et par là mis sur le pavé!

Min. I am very sorry for you.

Ric. Vous êtes bien bonne, Mademoiselle— No, merit have no reward here. Réformer a man, like me! A man who also

have ruin himself in dis service! I have lost in it so much as twenty thousand livres. What have I now? Tranchons le mot; je n'ai pas le sou, et me voilà exactement vis-à-vis de rien.

Min. I am exceedingly sorry.

Ric. Vous êtes bien bonne, Mademoiselle. But as one say —misfortune never come alone! qu'un malheur ne vient jamais seul: so it arrive with me. What ressource rests for an honnête homme of my extraction, but play? Now, I always played with luck, so long I not need her. Now I very much need her, je joue avec un guignon, Mademoiselle, qui surpasse toute croyance. For fifteen days, not one is passed, dat I always am broke. Yesterday I was broke dree times. Je sais bien, qu'il y avait quelque chose de plus que le jeu. Car parmi mes pontes se trouvaient certaines dames. I will not speak more. One must be very galant to les dames. Dey have invite me again to-day, to give me revanche; mais— vous m'entendez, Mademoiselle—one must first have to live, before one can have to play.

Min. I hope, sir——

Ric. Vous êtes bien bonne, Mademoiselle.

Min. [*Takes* FRANZISKA *aside.*] Franziska, I really feel for the man. Would he take it ill if I offer him something?

Fran. He does not look to me like a man who would.

Min. Very well!—Sir, I perceive that—you play, that you keep the bank; doubtless in places where something is to be won. I must also confess that I—am very fond of play.

Ric. Tant mieux, Mademoiselle, tant mieux! Tous les gens d'esprit aiment le jeu à la fureur.

Min. That I am very fond of winning; that I like to trust my money to a man who—knows how to play. Are you inclined, sir, to let me join you? To let me have a share in your bank?

Ric. Comment, Mademoiselle, vous voulez être de moitié avec moi? De tout mon cœur.

Min. At first, only with a trifle.

[*Opens her desk and takes out some money.*

Ric. Ah! Mademoiselle, que vous êtes charmante!

Min. Here is what I won a short time back; only ten pistoles. I am ashamed, so little——

Ric. Donnez toujours, Mademoiselle, donnez. [*Takes it.*

Min. Without doubt, your bank, sir, is very considerable.

Ric. Oh! yes, vary considerable. Ten pistoles! You shall have, Madame, an interest in my bank for one third, pour le tiers. Yes, one third part it shall be—something more. With a beautiful lady one must not be too exac. I rejoice myself, to make by that a liaison with Madame, et de ce moment je recommence à bien augurer de ma fortune.

Min. But I can not be present, sir, when you play.

Ric. For why it nécessaire dat you be present? We other players are honourable people between us.

Min. If we are fortunate, sir, you will of course bring me my share. If we are unfortunate——

Ric. I come to bring recruits, n'est pas, Madame?

Min. In time recruits might fail. Manage our money well, sir.

Ric. What does Madame think me? A simpleton, a stupid devil?

Min. I beg your pardon.

Ric. Je suis des bons, Mademoiselle. Savez vous ce que cela veut dire? I am of the quite practised——

Min. But still, sir——

Ric. Je sais monter un coup——

Min. [*Amazed.*] Could you?

Ric. Je file la carte avec une adresse.

Min. Never!

Ric. Je fais sauter la coupe avec une dextérité.

Min. You surely would not, sir!——

Ric. What not, Madame; what not? Donnez moi un pigeonneau à plumer, et——

Min. Play false! Cheat!

Ric. Comment, Mademoiselle? Vous appelez cela cheat? Corriger la fortune, l'enchaîner sous ses doigts, être sûr de son fait, dat you call cheat? Cheat! Oh! what a poor tongue is your tongue! what an awkward tongue!

Min. No, sir, if you think so——

Ric. Laissez-moi faire, Mademoiselle, and be tranquille! What matter to you how I play? Enough! to-morrow, Madame, you see me again or with hundred pistol, or you see me

no more. Votre très-humble, Mademoiselle, votre très-humble. [*Exit quickly.*

Min. [*Looking after him with astonishment and displeasure.*] I hope the latter, sir.

SCENE III

MINNA, FRANZISKA

Fran. [*Angrily.*] What can I say? Oh! how grand! how grand!

Min. Laugh at me; I deserve it. [*After reflecting, more calmly.*] No, do not laugh; I do not deserve it.

Fran. Excellent! You have done a charming act—set a knave upon his legs again.

Min. It was intended for an unfortunate man.

Fran. And what is the best part of it, the fellow considers you like himself. Oh! I must follow him, and take the money from him. [*Going.*

Min. Franziska, do not let the coffee get quite cold; pour it out.

Fran. He must return it to you; you have thought better of it; you will not play in partnership with him. Ten pistoles! You heard, my lady, that he was a beggar! [MINNA *pours out the coffee herself.*] Who would give such a sum to a beggar? And to endeavour, in the bargain, to save him the humiliation of having begged for it! The charitable woman who, out of generosity, mistakes the beggar, is in return mistaken by the beggar. It serves you right, my lady, if he considers your gift as—I know not what. [MINNA *hands a cup of coffee to* FRANZISKA.] Do you wish to make my blood boil still more? I do not want any. [MINNA *puts it down again.*] "Parbleu, Madame, merit have no reward here." [*Imitating the Frenchman.*] I think not, when such rogues are allowed to walk about unhanged.

Min. [*Coldly and slowly, while sipping her coffee.*] Girl, you understand good men very well; but when will you learn to bear with the bad? And yet they are also men; and frequently not so bad as they seem. One should look for their good side. I fancy this Frenchman is nothing worse than vain. Through mere vanity he gives himself out as a false

player; he does not wish to appear under an obligation to one; he wishes to save himself the thanks. Perhaps he may now go, pay his small debts, live quietly and frugally on the rest as far as it will go, and think no more of play. If that be so, Franziska, let him come for recruits whenever he pleases. [*Gives her cup to* Franziska.] There, put it down! But, tell me, should not Tellheim be here by this time?

Fran. No, my lady, I can neither find out the bad side in a good man, nor the good side in a bad man.

Min. Surely he will come!

Fran. He ought to remain away! You remark in him—in him, the best of men—a little pride; and therefore you intend to tease him so cruelly!

Min. Are you at it again? Be silent! I will have it so. Woe to you if you spoil this fun of mine—if you do not say and do all, as we have agreed. I will leave you with him alone; and then—but here he comes.

SCENE IV

Paul Werner [*comes in, carrying himself very erect as if on duty*], Minna, Franziska

Fran. No, it is only his dear Sergeant.

Min. Dear Sergeant! Whom does the "dear" refer to?

Fran. Pray, my lady, do not make the man embarrassed. —Your servant, Mr. Sergeant; what news do you bring us?

Wer. [*Goes up to* Minna, *without noticing* Franziska.] Major von Tellheim begs to present, through me, Sergeant Werner, his most respectful compliments to Fräulein von Barnhelm, and to inform her that he will be here directly.

Min. Where is he, then?

Wer. Your ladyship will pardon him; we left our quarters before it began to strike three: but the paymaster met us on the way; and because conversation with those gentlemen has no end, the Major made me a sign to report the case to your ladyship.

Min. Very well, Mr. Sergeant. I only hope the paymaster may have good news for him.

Wer. Such gentlemen seldom have good news for officers.—Has your ladyship any orders? [*Going.*

Fran. Why, where are you going again, Mr. Sergeant? Had not we something to say to each other?

Wer. [*In a whisper to* FRANZISKA, *and seriously.*] Not here, little woman; it is against respect, against discipline.—Your ladyship——

Min Thank you for your trouble. I am glad to have made your acquaintance. Franziska has spoken in high praise of you to me. [WERNER *makes a stiff bow, and goes.*

SCENE V

MINNA, FRANZISKA

Min. So that is your Sergeant, Franziska?

Fran. [*Aside.*] I have not time to reproach her for that jeering *your.* [*Aloud.*] Yes, my lady, that is my Sergeant. You think him, no doubt, somewhat stiff and wooden. He also appeared so to me just now; but I observed, he thought he must march past you as if on parade. And when soldiers are on parade, they certainly look more like wooden dolls than men. You should see and hear him when he is himself.

Min. So I should indeed!

Fran. He must still be in the next room; may I go and talk with him a little?

Min. I refuse you this pleasure unwillingly: but you must remain here, Franziska. You must be present at our conversation. Another thing occurs to me. [*Takes her ring from her finger.*] There, take my ring; keep it for me, and give me the Major's in the place of it.

Fran. Why so?

Min. [*While* FRANZISKA *is fetching the ring.*] I scarcely know, myself; but I fancy I see, beforehand, how I may make use of it.—Some one is knocking. Give it to me, quickly. [*Puts the ring on.*] It is he.

SCENE VI

MAJOR VON TELLHEIM [*in the same coat, but otherwise as* FRANZISKA *advised*], MINNA, FRANZISKA

Maj. T. Madam, you will excuse the delay.

Min. Oh! Major, we will not treat each other in quite such

a military fashion. You are here now; and to await a pleasure, is itself a pleasure. Well [*looking at him and smiling*], dear Tellheim, have we not been like children?

Maj. T. Yes, Madam; like children, who resist when they ought to obey quietly.

Min. We will drive out, dear Major, to see a little of the town, and afterward to meet my uncle.

Maj. T. What!

Min. You see, we have not yet had an opportunity of mentioning the most important matters even. He is coming here to-day. It was accident that brought me here without him, a day sooner.

Maj. T. Count von Bruchsal! Has he returned?

Min. The troubles of the war drove him into Italy: peace has brought him back again. Do not be uneasy, Tellheim; if we formerly feared on his part the greatest obstacle to our union——

Maj. T. To our union!

Min. He is now your friend. He has heard too much good of you from too many people, not to become so. He longs to become personally acquainted with the man whom his heiress has chosen. He comes as uncle, as guardian, as father, to give me to you.

Maj. T. Ah! dear lady, why did you not read my letter? Why would you not read it?

Min. Your letter! Oh! yes, I remember you sent me one. —What did you do with that letter, Franziska? Did we, or did we not read it?—What was it you wrote to me, dear Tellheim?

Maj. T. Nothing but what honour commands me.

Min. That is, not to desert an honourable woman who loves you. Certainly that is what honour commands. Indeed, I ought to have read your letter. But what I have not read, I shall hear, shall not I?

Maj. T. Yes, you shall hear it.

Min. No, I need not even hear it. It speaks for itself. As if you could be guilty of such an unworthy act, as not to take me! Do you know that I should be pointed at for the rest of my life? My countrywomen would talk about me, and say, "That is she, that is the Fräulein von Barnhelm, who fancied

that because she was rich she could marry the noble Tellheim; as if such men were to be caught with money." That is what they would say, for they are all envious of me. That I am rich, they can not deny; but they do not wish to acknowledge that I am also a tolerably good girl, who would prove herself worthy of her husband. Is that not so, Tellheim?

Maj. T. Yes, yes, Madam, that is like your countrywomen. They will envy you exceedingly a discharged officer, with sullied honour, a cripple, and a beggar.

Min. And are you all that? If I mistake not, you told me something of the kind this forenoon. Therein are good and evil mixed. Let us examine each charge more closely. You are discharged? So you say. I thought your regiment was only drafted into another. How did it happen that a man of your merit was not retained?

Maj. T. It has happened, as it must happen. The great ones are convinced that a soldier does very little through regard for them, not much more from a sense of duty, but everything for his own advantage. What then can they think they owe him? Peace has made a great many, like myself, superfluous to them; and at last we shall all be superfluous.

Min. You talk as a man must talk, to whom in return the great are quite superfluous. And never were they more so than now. I return my best thanks to the great ones that they have given up their claims to a man whom I would very unwillingly have shared with them. I am your sovereign, Tellheim; you want no other master. To find you discharged, is a piece of good fortune I dared scarcely dream of! But you are not only discharged; you are more. And what are you more? A cripple, you say! Well! [*looking at him from head to foot*] the cripple is tolerably whole and upright—appears still to be pretty well and strong. Dear Tellheim, if you expect to go begging on the strength of your limbs, I prophesy that you will be relieved at very few doors; except at the door of a good-natured girl like myself.

Maj. T. I only hear the joking girl now, dear Minna.

Min. And I only hear the "dear Minna" in your chiding. I will not joke any longer; for I recollect that after all you are something of a cripple. You are wounded by a shot in the

right arm; but, all things considered, I do not find much fault with that. I am so much the more secure from your blows.

Maj. T. Madam!

Min. You would say, "You are so much the less secure from mine." Well, well, dear Tellheim, I hope you will not drive me to that.

Maj. T. You laugh, Madam. I only lament that I can not laugh with you.

Min. Why not? What have you to say against laughing? Can not one be very serious even while laughing? Dear Major, laughter keeps us more rational than vexation. The proof is before us. Your laughing friend judges of your circumstances more correctly than you do yourself. Because you are discharged, you say your honour is sullied; because you are wounded in the arm, you call yourself a cripple. Is that right? Is that no exaggeration? And is it my doing that all exaggerations are so open to ridicule? I dare say, if I examine your beggary that it will also be as little able to stand the test. You may have lost your equipage once, twice, or thrice; your deposits in the hands of this or that banker may have disappeared together with those of other people; you may have no hope of seeing this or that money again which you may have advanced in the service; but are you a beggar on that account? If nothing else remained to you but what my uncle is bringing for you——

Maj. T. Your uncle, Madam, will bring nothing for me.

Min. Nothing but the two thousand pistoles which you so generously advanced to our government.

Maj. T. If you had but read my letter, Madam!

Min. Well, I did read it. But what I read in it, on this point, is a perfect riddle. It is impossible that any one should wish to turn a noble action into a crime. But explain to me, dear Major.

Maj. T. You remember, Madam, that I had orders to collect the contribution for the war most strictly in cash in the districts in your neighbourhood. I wished to forego this severity, and advanced the money that was deficient myself.

Min. I remember it well. I loved you for that deed before I had seen you.

Maj. T. The government gave me their bill, and I wished, at the signing of the peace, to have the sum entered among the debts to be repaid by them. The bill was acknowledged as good, but my ownership of the same was disputed. People looked incredulous, when I declared that I had myself advanced the amount in cash. It was considered as bribery, as a douceur from the government, because I at once agreed to take the smallest sum with which I could have been satisfied in a case of the greatest exigency. Thus the bill went from my possession, and if it be paid, will certainly not be paid to me. Hence, Madam, I consider my honour to be suspected! not on account of my discharge, which, if I had not received, I should have applied for. You look serious, Madam! Why do you not laugh? Ha! ha! ha! I am laughing.

Min. Oh! stifle that laugh, Tellheim, I implore you! It is the terrible laugh of misanthropy. No, you are not the man to repent of a good deed, because it may have had a bad result for yourself. Nor can these consequences possibly be of long duration. The truth must come to light. The testimony of my uncle, of our government——

Maj. T. Of your uncle! Of your government! Ha! ha! ha!

Min. That laugh will kill me, Tellheim. If you believe in virtue and Providence, Tellheim, do not laugh so! I never heard a curse more terrible than that laugh! But, viewing the matter in the worst light, if they are determined to mistake your character here, with us you will not be misunderstood. No, we can not, we will not, misunderstand you, Tellheim. And if our government has the least sentiment of honour, I know what it must do. But I am foolish; what would that matter? Imagine, Tellheim, that you have lost the two thousand pistoles on some gay evening. The king was an unfortunate card for you: the queen [*pointing to herself*] will be so much the more favourable. Providence, believe me, always indemnifies a man of honour—often even beforehand. The action which was to cost you two thousand pistoles, gained you me. Without that action, I never should have been desirous of making your acquaintance. You know I went uninvited to the first party where I thought I should meet you. I went entirely on your account. I went with a fixed determination

to love you—I loved you already! with the fixed determination to make you mine, if I should find you as dark and ugly as the Moor of Venice. So dark and ugly you are not; nor will you be so jealous. But, Tellheim, Tellheim, you are yet very like him! Oh! the unmanageable, stubborn man, who always keeps his eye fixed upon the phantom of honour, and becomes hardened against every other sentiment! Your eyes this way! Upon me—me, Tellheim! [*He remains thoughtful and immovable, with his eyes fixed on one spot.*] Of what are you thinking? Do you not hear me?

Maj. T. [*Absent.*] Oh, yes; but tell me, how came the Moor into the service of Venice? Had the Moor no country of his own? Why did he hire his arm and his blood to a foreign land?

Min. [*Alarmed.*] Of what are you thinking, Tellheim? It is time to break off. Come! [*Taking him by the hand.*]—Franziska, let the carriage be brought round.

Maj. T. [*Disengaging his hand, and following* Franziska.] No, Franziska; I can not have the honour of accompanying your mistress.—Madam, let me still retain my senses unimpaired for to-day, and give me leave to go. You are on the right way to deprive me of them. I resist it as much as I can. But hear, while I am still myself, what I have firmly determined, and from which nothing in the world shall turn me. If I have not better luck in the game of life; if a complete change in my fortune does not take place; if——

Min. I must interrupt you, Major.—We ought to have told him that at first, Franziska. You remind me of nothing.—Our conversation would have taken quite a different turn, Tellheim, if I had commenced with the good news which the Chevalier de la Marlinière brought just now.

Maj. T. The Chevalier de la Marlinière! Who is he?

Fran. He may be a very honest man, Major von Tellheim, except that——

Min. Silence, Franziska! Also a discharged officer from the Dutch service, who——

Maj. T. Ah! Lieutenant Riccaut!

Min. He assured us he was a friend of yours.

Maj. T. I assure you that I am not his.

Min. And that some minister or other had told him, in confidence, that your business was likely to have the very best termination. A letter from the king must now be on its way to you.

Maj. T. How came Riccaut and a minister in company? Something certainly must have happened concerning my affair; for just now the paymaster of the forces told me that the king had set aside all the evidence offered against me, and that I might take back my promise, which I had given in writing, not to depart from here until acquitted. But that will be all. They wish to give me an opportunity of getting away. But they are wrong, I shall not go. Sooner shall the utmost distress waste me away before the eyes of my calumniators, than——

Min. Obstinate man!

Maj. T. I require no favour; I want justice. My honour——

Min. The honour of such a man——

Maj. T. [*Warmly.*] No, Madam, you may be able to judge of any other subject, but not of this. Honour is not the voice of conscience, not the evidence of a few honourable men——

Min. No, no, I know it well. Honour is—honour.

Maj. T. In short, Madam— You did not let me finish.—I was going to say, if they keep from me so shamefully what is my own; if my honour be not perfectly righted—I can not, Madam, ever be yours, for I am not worthy, in the eyes of the world, of being yours. Minna von Barnhelm deserves an irreproachable husband. It is a worthless love which does not scruple to expose its object to scorn. He is a worthless man who is not ashamed to owe a woman all his good fortune; whose blind tenderness——

Min. And is that really your feeling, Major? [*Turning her back suddenly.*]—Franziska!

Maj. T. Do not be angry.

Min. [*Aside to* FRANZISKA.] Now is the time! What do you advise me, Franziska?

Fran. I advise nothing. But certainly he goes rather too far.

Maj. T. [*Approaching to interrupt them.*] You are angry, Madam.

Min. [*Ironically.*] I? Not in the least.

Maj. T. If I loved you less——

Min. [*Still in the same tone.*] Oh! certainly, it would be a misfortune for me. And hear, Major, I also will not be the cause of your unhappiness. One should love with perfect disinterestedness. It is as well that I have not been more open! Perhaps your pity might have granted to me what your love refuses. [*Drawing the ring slowly from her finger.*

Maj. T. What does this mean, Madam?

Min. No, neither of us must make the other either more or less happy. True love demands it. I believe you, Major; and you have too much honour to mistake love.

Maj. T. Are you jesting, Madam?

Min. Here! take back the ring with which you plighted your troth to me. [*Gives him the ring.*] Let it be so! We will suppose we have never met.

Maj. T. What do I hear?

Min. Does it surprise you? Take it, sir. You surely have not been pretending only!

Maj. T. [*Takes the ring from her.*] Heavens! can Minna speak thus!

Min. In one case you can not be mine; in no case can I be yours. Your misfortune is probable; mine is certain. Farewell! [*Is going.*

Maj. T. Where are you going, dearest Minna?

Min. Sir, you insult me now by that term of endearment.

Maj. T. What is the matter, Madam? Where are you going?

Min. Leave me. I go to hide my tears from you, deceiver! [*Exit.*

SCENE VII

Major von Tellheim, Franziska

Maj. T. Her tears? And I am to leave her.

[*Is about to follow her.*

Fran. [*Holding him back.*] Surely not, Major. You would not follow her into her own room!

Maj. T. Her misfortune? Did she not speak of misfortune?

Fran. Yes, truly; the misfortune of losing you, after——

Maj. T. After? After what? There is more in this. What is it, Franziska? Tell me! Speak!

Fran. After, I mean, she has made such sacrifices on your account.

Maj. T. Sacrifices for me!

Fran. Well, listen. It is a good thing for you, Major, that you are freed from your engagement with her in this manner. —Why should I not tell you? It can not remain a secret long. We have fled from home. Count von Bruchsal has disinherited my mistress, because she would not accept a husband of his choice. On that every one deserted and slighted her. What could we do? We determined to seek him, whom——

Maj. T. Enough! Come, and let me throw myself at her feet.

Fran. What are you thinking about? Rather go, and thank your good fortune.

Maj. T. Pitiful creature! For what do you take me? Yet no, my dear Franziska, the advice did not come from your heart. Forgive my anger!

Fran. Do not detain me any longer. I must see what she is about. How easily something might happen to her! Go now, and come again, if you like. [*Follows* MINNA.

SCENE VIII

MAJOR VON TELLHEIM

Maj. T. But, Franziska! Oh! I will wait your return here. —No, that is more torturing!—If she is in earnest, she will not refuse to forgive me.—Now I want your aid, honest Werner!— No, Minna, I am no deceiver! [*Rushes off.*

ACT V

SCENE I

MAJOR VON TELLHEIM [*from one side*], WERNER [*from the other*]

MAJOR VON TELLHEIM. Ah! Werner! I have been looking for you everywhere. Where have you been?

Wer. And I have been looking for you, Major; that is always the way.—I bring you good news.

Maj. T. I do not want your news now; I want your money. Quick, Werner, give me all you have; and then raise as much more as you can.

Wer. Major! Now, upon my life, that is just what I said—"He will borrow money from me, when he has got it himself to lend."

Maj. T. You surely are not seeking excuses!

Wer. That I may have nothing to upbraid you with, take it with your right hand, and give it me again with your left.

Maj. T. Do not detain me, Werner. It is my intention to repay you; but when and how, God knows!

Wer. Then you do not know yet that the treasury has received an order to pay you your money? I just heard it at——

Maj. T. What are you talking about? What nonsense have you let them palm off on you? Do you not see that if it were true, I should be the first person to know it? In short, Werner, money! money!

Wer. Very well, with pleasure. Here is some! A hundred louis d'ors there, and a hundred ducats there. [*Gives him both.*

Maj. T. Werner, go and give Just the hundred louis d'ors. Let him redeem the ring again, on which he raised the money this morning. But whence will you get some more, Werner? I want a good deal more.

Wer. Leave that to me. The man who bought my farm lives in the town. The date for payment is a fortnight hence, certainly; but the money is ready, and by a reduction of one half per cent——

Maj. T. Very well, my dear Werner! You see that I have had recourse to you alone—I must also confide all to you. The young lady you have seen is in distress——

Wer. That is bad!

Maj. T. But to-morrow she shall be my wife.

Wer. That is good!

Maj. T. And the day after, I leave this place with her. I can go; I will go. I would sooner throw over everything here! Who knows where some good luck may be in store for me? If you will, Werner, come with us. We will serve again.

Wer. Really? But where there is war, Major!

Maj. T. To be sure. Go, Werner, we will speak of this again.

Wer. Oh! my dear Major! The day after to-morrow! Why not to-morrow? I will get everything ready. In Persia, Major, there is a famous war; what do you say?

Maj. T. We will think of it. Only go, Werner!

Wer. Hurrah! Long live Prince Heraclius! [*Exit.*

SCENE II

MAJOR VON TELLHEIM

Maj. T. How do I feel!—My whole soul has acquired a new impulse. My own unhappiness bowed me to the ground; made me fretful, short-sighted, shy, careless: her unhappiness raises me. I see clearly again, and feel myself ready and capable of undertaking anything for her sake. Why do I tarry? [*Is going toward* MINNA'S *room, when* FRANZISKA *comes out of it.*

SCENE III

FRANZISKA, MAJOR VON TELLHEIM

Fran. Is it you? I thought I heard your voice. What do you want, Major?

Maj. T. What do I want! What is she doing? Come!

Fran. She is just going out for a drive.

Maj. T. And alone? Without me? Where to?

Fran. Have you forgotten, Major?

Maj. T. How silly you are, Franziska! I irritated her, and she was angry. I will beg her pardon, and she will forgive me.

Fran. What! After you have taken the ring back, Major!

Maj. T. Ah! I did that in my confusion. I had forgotten about the ring. Where did I put it? [*Searches for it.*] Here it is.

Fran. Is that it? [*Aside, as he puts it again in his pocket.*] If he would only look at it closer!

Maj. T. She pressed it upon me so bitterly. But I have forgotten that. A full heart can not weigh words. She will not for one moment refuse to take it again. And have I not hers?

Fran. She is now waiting for it in return. Where is it, Major? Show it to me, do!

Maj. T. [*Embarrassed.*] I have—forgotten to put it on. Just—Just will bring it directly.

Fran. They are something alike, I suppose; let me look at that one. I am very fond of such things.

Maj. T. Another time, Franziska. Come now.

Fran. [*Aside.*] He is determined not to be drawn out of his mistake.

Maj. T. What do you say? Mistake!

Fran. It is a mistake, I say, if you think that my mistress is still a good match. Her own fortune is far from considerable; by a few calculations in their own favour her guardians may reduce it to nothing. She expected everything from her uncle; but this cruel uncle——

Maj. T. Let him go! Am I not man enough to make it all good to her again?

Fran. Do you hear? She is ringing; I must go in again.

Maj. T. I will accompany you.

Fran. For Heaven's sake, no! She forbade me expressly to speak with you. Come in at any rate a little time after me.

[*Goes in.*

SCENE IV

MAJOR VON TELLHEIM

Maj. T. [*Calling after her.*] Announce me! Speak for me, Franziska! I shall follow you directly. What shall I say to

her? Yet where the heart can speak, no preparation is necessary. There is one thing only which may need a studied turn —this reserve, this scrupulousness of throwing herself, unfortunate as she is, into my arms; this anxiety to make a false show of still possessing that happiness which she has lost through me. How she is to exculpate herself to herself—for by me it is already forgiven—for this distrust in my honour, in her own worth.—Ah! here she comes.

SCENE V

MINNA, FRANZISKA, MAJOR VON TELLHEIM

Min. [*Speaking as she comes out, as if not aware of the* MAJOR'S *presence.*] The carriage is at the door, Franziska, is it not? My fan!

Maj. T. [*Advancing to her.*] Where are you going, Madam?

Min. [*With forced coldness.*] I am going out, Major. I guess why you have given yourself the trouble of coming back; to return me my ring. Very well, Major von Tellheim, have the goodness to give it to Franziska.—Franziska, take the ring from Major von Tellheim!—I have no time to lose. [*Is going.*

Maj. T. [*Stepping before her.*] Madam! Ah! what have I heard? I was unworthy of such love.

Min. So, Franziska, you have——

Fran. Told him all.

Maj. T. Do not be angry with me, Madam. I am no deceiver. You have, on my account, lost much in the eyes of the world, but not in mine. In my eyes you have gained beyond measure by this loss. It was too sudden. You feared it might make an unfavourable impression on me; at first you wished to hide it from me. I do not complain of this mistrust. It arose from the desire to retain my affection. That desire is my pride. You found me in distress; and you did not wish to add distress to distress. You could not divine how far your distress would raise me above any thoughts of my own.

Min. That is all very well, Major, but it is now over. I have released you from your engagement; you have, by taking back the ring——

Maj. T. Consented to nothing! On the contrary, I now

consider myself bound more firmly than ever. You are mine, Minna, mine forever. [*Takes off the ring.*] Here, take it for the second time—the pledge of my fidelity.

Min. I take that ring again! That ring?

Maj. T. Yes, dearest Minna, yes.

Min. What are you asking me? that ring?

Maj. T. You received it for the first time from my hand, when our positions were similar and the circumstances propitious. They are no longer propitious, but are again similar. Equality is always the strongest tide of love. Permit me, dearest Minna! [*Seizes her hand to put on the ring.*

Min. What! by force, Major! No, there is no power in the world that shall compel me to take back that ring! Do you think that I am in want of a ring? Oh! you may see [*pointing to her ring*] that I have another here which is in no way inferior to yours.

Fran. [*Aside.*] Well, if he does not see it now!

Maj. T. [*Letting fall her hand.*] What is this? I see Fräulein von Barnhelm, but I do not hear her.—You are pretending. —Pardon me, that I use your own words.

Min. [*In her natural tone.*] Did those words offend you, Major?

Maj. T. They grieved me much.

Min. [*Affected.*] They were not meant to do that, Tellheim. Forgive me, Tellheim.

Maj. T. Ah! that friendly tone tells me you are yourself again, Minna; that you still love me.

Fran. [*Exclaims.*] The joke will soon have gone a little too far.

Min. [*In a commanding tone.*] Franziska, you will not interfere in our affairs, I beg.

Fran. [*Aside, in a surprised tone.*] Not enough yet!

Min. Yes, sir, it would only be womanish vanity in me to pretend to be cold and scornful. No! Never! You deserve to find me as sincere as yourself. I do love you still, Tellheim, I love you still; but notwithstanding——

Maj. T. No more, dearest Minna, no more!

[*Seizes her hand again, to put on the ring.*

Min. [*Drawing back her hand.*] Notwithstanding, so much

the more am I determined that that shall never be—never!—Of what are you thinking, Major?—I thought your own distress was sufficient. You must remain here; you must obtain by obstinacy—no better phrase occurs to me at the moment—the most perfect satisfaction, obtain it by obstinacy— And that even though the utmost distress should waste you away before the eyes of your calumniators——

Maj. T. So I thought, so I said, when I knew not what I thought or said. Chagrin and stifling rage had enveloped my whole soul; love itself, in the full blaze of happiness, could not illumine it. But it has sent its daughter, Pity, more familiar with gloomy misfortune, and she has dispelled the cloud, and opened again all the avenues of my soul to sensations of tenderness. The impulse of self-preservation awakes, when I have something more precious than myself to support, and to support through my own exertions. Do not let the word "pity" offend you. From the innocent cause of our distress we may hear the term without humiliation. I am this cause; through me, Minna, have you lost friends and relations, fortune and country. Through me, in me, must you find them all again, or I shall have the destruction of the most lovely of her sex upon my soul. Let me not think of a future in which I must detest myself.—No, nothing shall detain me here longer. From this moment I will oppose nothing but contempt to the injustice which I suffer. Is this country the world? Does the sun rise here alone? Where can I not go? In what service shall I be refused? And should I be obliged to seek it in the most distant clime, only follow me with confidence, dearest Minna—we shall want for nothing. I have a friend who will assist me with pleasure.

SCENE VI

An ORDERLY, MAJOR VON TELLHEIM, MINNA, FRANZISKA

Fran. [*Seeing the* ORDERLY.] Hist, Major!

Maj. T. [*To the* ORDERLY.] Who do you want?

Ord. I am looking for Major von Tellheim. Ah! you are the Major, I see. I have to give you this letter from His Majesty the King. [*Taking one out of his bag.*

Maj. T. To me?

Ord. According to the direction.

Min. Franziska, do you hear? The Chevalier spoke the truth, after all.

Ord. [*While* Tellheim *takes the letter.*] I beg your pardon, Major; you should properly have had it yesterday, but I could not find you out. I learned your address this morning only from Lieutenant Riccaut, on parade.

Fran. Do you hear, my lady?—That is the Chevalier's minister. "What is the name of de ministre out dere, on de broad place?"

Maj. T. I am extremely obliged to you for your trouble.

Ord. It is my duty, Major. [*Exit.*

SCENE VII

Major von Tellheim, Minna, Franziska

Maj. T. Ah! Minna, what is this? What does this contain?

Min. I am not entitled to extend my curiosity so far.

Maj. T. What! You would still separate my fate from yours?—But why do I hesitate to open it? It can not make me more unhappy than I am: no, dearest Minna, it can not make us more unhappy—but perhaps more happy! Permit me.

[*While he opens and reads the letter, the* Landlord *comes stealthily on the stage.*

SCENE VIII

Landlord, Major von Tellheim, Minna, Franziska

Land. [*To* Franziska.] Hist! my pretty maid! A word!

Fran. [*To the* Landlord.] Mr. Landlord, we do not yet know ourselves what is in the letter.

Land. Who wants to know about the letter? I come about the ring. The lady must give it to me again, directly. Just is there, and wants to redeem it.

Min. [*Who in the meantime has approached the* Landlord] Tell Just that it is already redeemed; and tell him by whom—by me.

Land. But——

Min. I take it upon myself. Go! [*Exit* Landlord.

SCENE IX

MAJOR VON TELLHEIM, MINNA, FRANZISKA

Fran. And now, my lady, make it up with the poor Major.

Min. Oh! kind intercessor! As if the difficulties must not soon explain themselves.

Maj. T. [*After reading the letter with much emotion.*] Ah! nor has he herein belied himself! Oh! Minna, what justice! what clemency! This is more than I expected; more than I deserve!—My fortune, my honour, all is re-established!—Do I dream? [*Looking at the letter, as if to convince himself.*] No, no delusion born of my own desires! Read it yourself, Minna; read it yourself!

Min. I would not presume, Major.

Maj. T. Presume! The letter is to me; to your Tellheim, Minna. It contains—what your uncle can not take from you. You must read it! Do read it.

Min. If it affords you pleasure, Major.

[*Takes the letter and reads.*

"My dear Major von Tellheim,

"I hereby inform you that the business which caused me some anxiety on account of your honour has been cleared up in your favour. My brother had a more detailed knowledge of it, and his testimony has more than proved your innocence. The Treasury has received orders to deliver again to you the bill in question, and to reimburse the sum advanced. I have also ordered that all claims which the Paymaster's Office brings forward against your accounts be nullified. Please to inform me whether your health will allow of your taking active service again. I can ill spare a man of your courage and sentiments. I am your gracious KING," etc.

Maj. T. Now, what do you say to that, Minna?

Min. [*Folding up and returning the letter.*] I? Nothing.

Maj. T. Nothing?

Min. Stay—yes. That your king, who is a great man, can also be a good man.—But what is that to me! He is not my king.

Maj. T. And do you say nothing more? Nothing about ourselves?

Min. You are going to serve again. From Major, you will become Lieutenant-Colonel, perhaps Colonel. I congratulate you with all my heart.

Maj. T. And you do not know me better? No, since Fortune restores me sufficient to satisfy the wishes of a reasonable man, it shall depend upon my Minna alone, whether for the future I shall belong to any one else but her. To her service alone my whole life shall be devoted! The service of the great is dangerous, and does not repay the trouble, the restraint, the humiliation which it costs. Minna is not among those vain people who love nothing in their husbands beyond their titles and positions. She will love me for myself; and for her sake I will forget the whole world. I became a soldier from party feeling—I do not myself know on what political principles—and from the whim that it is good for every honourable man to try the profession of arms for a time, to make himself familiar with danger, and to learn coolness and determination. Extreme necessity alone could have compelled me to make this trial a fixed mode of life, this temporary occupation a profession. But now that nothing compels me, my whole and sole ambition is to be a peaceful and a contented man. This with you, dearest Minna, I shall infallibly become; this in your society I shall unchangeably remain. Let the holy bond unite us to-morrow; and then we will look round us, and in the whole wide habitable world seek out the most peaceful, the brightest, most smiling nook which wants but a happy couple to be a Paradise. There we will dwell; there shall each day—What is the matter, Minna?

[Minna *turns away uneasily, and endeavours to hide her emotion.*

Min. [*Regaining her composure.*] It is cruel of you, Tellheim, to paint such happiness to me, when I am forced to renounce it. My loss——

Maj. T. Your loss! Why name your loss? All that Minna could lose is not Minna. You are still the sweetest, dearest, loveliest, best creature under the sun; all goodness and generosity, innocence and bliss! Now and then a little petulant; at times somewhat wilful—so much the better! So much the better! Minna would otherwise be an

angel, whom I should honour with trepidation, but not dare to love. [*Takes her hand to kiss it.*

Min. [*Drawing away her hand.*] Not so, sir. Why this sudden change? Is this flattering, impetuous lover the cold Tellheim!—Could his returning good fortune alone create this ardour in him? He will permit me during his passionate excitement to retain the power of reflection for us both. When he could himself reflect, I heard him say, "It is a worthless love which does not scruple to expose its object to scorn."—True; and I aspire to as pure and noble a love as he himself. Now, when honour calls him, when a great monarch solicits his services, shall I consent that he shall give himself up to love-sick dreams with me? that the illustrious warrior shall degenerate into a toying swain? No, Major, follow the call of your higher destiny.

Maj. T. Well! if the busy world has greater charms for you, Minna, let us remain in the busy world! How mean, how poor is this busy world! you now only know its gilded surface. Yet certainly, Minna, you will— But let it be so! until then! Your charms shall not want admirers, nor will my happiness lack enviers.

Min. No, Tellheim, I do not mean that! I send you back into the busy world, on the road of honour, without wishing to accompany you. Tellheim will there require an irreproachable wife! A fugitive Saxon girl who has thrown herself upon him——

Maj. T. [*Starting up, and looking fiercely about him.*] Who dare say that? Ah! Minna, I feel afraid of myself, when I imagine that any one but yourself could have spoken so. My anger against him would know no bounds.

Min. Exactly! That is just what I fear. You would not endure one word of calumny against me, and yet you would have to put up with the very bitterest every day. In short, Tellheim, hear what I have firmly determined, and from which nothing in the world shall turn me——

Maj. T. Before you proceed, I implore you, Minna, reflect for one moment that you are about to pronounce a sentence of life or death upon me!

Min. Without a moment's reflection!— As certainly as I

have given you back the ring with which you formerly pledged your troth to me, as certainly as you have taken back that same ring, so certainly shall the unfortunate Minna never be the wife of the fortunate Tellheim!

Maj. T. And herewith you pronounce my sentence.

Min. Equality is the only sure bond of love. The happy Minna only wished to live for the happy Tellheim. Even Minna in misfortune would have allowed herself to be persuaded either to increase or to assuage the misfortune of her friend through herself— He must have seen, before the arrival of that letter, which has again destroyed all equality between us, that in appearance only I refused.

Maj. T. Is that true? I thank you, Minna, that you have not yet pronounced the sentence. You will only marry Tellheim when unfortunate? You may have him. [*Coolly.*] I perceive now that it would be indecorous in me to accept this tardy justice; that it will be better if I do not seek again that of which I have been deprived by such shameful suspicion. Yes; I will suppose that I have not received the letter. Behold my only answer to it! [*About to tear it up.*

Min. [*Stopping him.*] What are you going to do, Tellheim?

Maj. T. Obtain your hand.

Min. Stop!

Maj. T. Madam, it is torn without fail if you do not quickly recall your words.—Then we will see what else you may have to object to in me.

Min. What! In such a tone? Shall I, must I, thus become contemptible in my own eyes? Never! She is a worthless creature who is not ashamed to owe her whole happiness to the blind tenderness of a man!

Maj. T. False! utterly false!

Min. Can you venture to find fault with your own words when coming from my lips?

Maj. T. Sophistry! Does the weaker sex dishonour itself by every action which does not become the stronger? Or can a man do everything which is proper in a woman? Which is appointed by Nature to be the support of the other?

Min. Be not alarmed, Tellheim!— I shall not be quite

unprotected if I must decline the honour of your protection. I shall still have as much as is absolutely necessary. I have announced my arrival to our ambassador. I am to see him to-day. I hope he will assist me. Time is flying. Permit me, Major——

Maj. T. I will accompany you, Madam.

Min. No, Major; leave me.

Maj. T. Sooner shall your shadow desert you! Come, Madam, where you will, to whom you will, everywhere, to friends and strangers, will I repeat in your presence—repeat a hundred times each day—what a bond binds you to me, and with what cruel caprice you wish to break it——

SCENE X

JUST, *the rest as before*

Just. [*Impetuously.*] Major! Major!

Maj. T. Well!

Just. Here quick! quick!

Maj. T. Why? Come to me. Speak, what is the matter?

Just. What do you think? [*Whispers to him.*

Min. [*Aside to* FRANZISKA.] Do you notice anything, Franziska?

Fran. Oh! you merciless creature! I have stood here on thorns!

Maj. T. [*To* JUST.] What do you say?— That is not possible!— You? [*Looking fiercely at* MINNA.] Speak it out; tell it to her face.—Listen, Madam.

Just. The Landlord says that Fräulein von Barnhelm has taken the ring which I pledged to him; she recognised it as her own, and would not return it.

Maj. T. Is that true, Madam? No, that can not be true!

Min. [*Smiling.*] And why not, Tellheim? Why can it not be true?

Maj. T. [*Vehemently.*] Then it is true!— What terrible light suddenly breaks in upon me!— Now I know you—false, faithless one!

Min. [*Alarmed.*] Who, who is faithless?

Maj. T. You, whom I will never more name!

Min. Tellheim!

Maj. T. Forget my name— You came here with the intention of breaking with me— It is evident!— Oh, that chance should thus delight to assist the faithless! It brought your ring into your possession. Your craftiness contrived to get my own back into mine!

Min. Tellheim, what visions are you conjuring up? Be calm, and listen to me.

Fran. [*Aside.*] Now she will catch it!

SCENE XI

Werner [*with a purse full of gold*], *the rest as before*

Wer. Here I am already, Major!

Maj. T. [*Without looking at him.*] Who wants you?

Wer. I have brought more money! A thousand pistoles!

Maj. T. I do not want them!

Wer. And to-morrow, Major, you can have as many more.

Maj. T. Keep your money!

Wer. It is your money, Major— I do not think you see whom you are speaking to!

Maj. T. Take it away, I say!

Wer. What is the matter with you?—I am Werner.

Maj. T. All goodness is dissimulation; all kindness, deceit.

Wer. Is that meant for me?

Maj. T. As you please!

Wer. Why, I have only obeyed your commands.

Maj. T. Obey once more, and be off!

Wer. Major! [*Vexed.*] I am a man——

Maj. T. So much the better!

Wer. Who can also be angry.

Maj. T. Anger is the best thing we possess.

Wer. I beg you, Major.

Maj. T. How often must I tell you? I do not want your money!

Wer. [*In a rage.*] Then take it, who will!

[*Throws the purse on the ground, and goes to the side.*

Min. [*To* Franziska.] Ah! Franziska, I ought to have fol-

lowed your advice. I have carried the jest too far.—Still, when he hears me—— [*Going to him.*

Fran. [*Without answering* MINNA, *goes up to* WERNER.] Mr. Sergeant——

Wer. [*Pettishly.*] Go along!

Fran. Ah! what men these are!

Min. Tellheim! Tellheim! [TELLHEIM, *biting his fingers with rage, turns away his face, without listening.*] No, this is too bad— Only listen!— You are mistaken!— A mere misunderstanding. Tellheim, will you not hear your Minna? Can you have such a suspicion?— I break my engagement with you? I came here for that purpose?— Tellheim!

SCENE XII

TWO SERVANTS [*running into the room from different sides*], *the rest as before.*

First Ser. Your ladyship, his excellency the Count!

Second Ser. He is coming, your ladyship!

Fran. [*Running to the window.*] It is! it is he!

Min. Is it? Now, Tellheim, quick!

Maj. T. [*Suddenly recovering himself.*] Who, who comes? Your uncle, Madam! this cruel uncle!— Let him come; just let him come!— Fear not!— He shall not hurt you even by a look. He shall have to deal with me— You do not indeed deserve it of me.

Min. Quick, Tellheim! one embrace and forget all.

Maj. T. Ah! did I but know that you could regret——

Min. No, I can never regret having obtained a sight of your whole heart!— Ah! what a man you are!— Embrace your Minna, your happy Minna: and in nothing more happy than in the possession of you. [*Embracing.*] And now to meet him!

Maj. T. To meet whom?

Min. The best of your unknown friends.

Maj. T. What!

Min. The Count, my uncle, my father, your father— My flight, his displeasure, my loss of property—do you not see that all is a fiction, credulous knight?

Maj. T. Fiction! But the ring? the ring?

Min. Where is the ring that I gave back to you?

Maj. T. You will take it again? Ah! now I am happy—Here, Minna. [*Taking it from his pocket.*

Min. Look at it first! Oh! how blind are those who will not see!— What ring is that? the one you gave me? or the one I gave to you? Is it not the one which I did not like to leave in the Landlord's possession?

Maj. T. Heavens! what do I see! What do I hear!

Min. Shall I take it again now? Shall I? Give it to me! give it! [*Takes it from him, and then puts it on his finger herself.*] There, now all is right!

Maj. T. Where am I? [*Kissing her hand.*] Oh! malicious angel, to torture me so!

Min. As a proof, my dear husband, that you shall never play me a trick without my playing you one in return— Do you suppose that you did not torture me also?

Maj. T. Oh, you actresses! But I ought to have known you.

Fran. Not I, indeed; I am spoiled for acting. I trembled and shook, and was obliged to hold my lips together with my hand.

Min. Nor was mine an easy part.—But come now——

Maj. T. I have not recovered myself yet. How happy, yet how anxious, I feel! It is like awaking suddenly from a frightful dream.

Min. We are losing time— I hear him coming now.

SCENE XIII

Count von Bruchsal [*accompanied by several servants and the* Landlord], *the rest as before.*

Count. [*Entering.*] She arrived in safety, I hope?

Min. [*Running to meet him.*] Ah! my father!

Count. Here I am, dear Minna. [*Embracing her.*] But what, girl [*seeing Tellheim*], only four-and-twenty hours here, and friends—company already!

Min. Guess who it is?

Count. Not your Tellheim, surely!

Min. Who else!—Come, Tellheim. [*Introducing him.*

Count. Sir, we have never met; but at the first glance I fancied I recognised you. I wished it might be Major von Tellheim.—Your hand, sir; you have my highest esteem; I ask for your friendship. My niece, my daughter loves you.

Min. You know that, my father!—And was my love blind?

Count. No, Minna, your love was not blind; but your lover —is dumb.

Maj. T. [*Throwing himself in the* COUNT'S *arms.*] Let me recover myself, my father!

Count. Right, my son. I see your heart can speak, though your lips can not. I do not usually care for those who wear this uniform. But you are an honourable man, Tellheim; and one must love an honourable man, in whatever garb he may be.

Min. Ah! did you but know all!

Count. Why should I not hear all?—Which are my apartments, Landlord?

Land. Will your Excellency have the goodness to walk this way?

Count. Come, Minna!—Pray come, Major!

[*Exit with the* LANDLORD *and servants.*

Min. Come, Tellheim!

Maj. T. I will follow you in an instant, Minna. One word first with this man [*Turning to* WERNER.

Min. And a good word, methinks, it should be.—Should it not, Franziska? [*Exit.*

SCENE XIV

MAJOR VON TELLHEIM, WERNER, JUST, FRANZISKA

Maj. T. [*Pointing to the purse which* WERNER *had thrown down.*] Here, Just, pick up the purse, and carry it home. Go!

[JUST *takes it up and goes.*

Wer. [*Still standing, out of humour, in a corner, and absent till he hears the last words.*] Well, what now?

Maj. T. [*In a friendly tone while going up to him.*] Werner, when can I have the other two thousand pistoles?

Wer. [*In a good humour again instantly.*] To-morrow, Major, to-morrow.

Maj. T. I do not need to become your debtor; but I will

be your banker. All you good-natured people ought to have guardians. You are in a manner spendthrifts.—I irritated you just now, Werner.

Wer. Upon my life you did! But I ought not to have been such a dolt. Now I see it all clearly. I deserve a hundred lashes. You may give them to me, if you will, Major. Only no more ill will, dear Major!

Maj. T. Ill will! [*Shaking him by the hand.*] Read in my eyes all that I can not say to you.—Ah! let me see the man with a better wife and a more trusty friend than I shall have. —Eh! Franziska? [*Exit.*

SCENE XV

Werner, Franziska

Fran. [*Aside.*] Yes, indeed, he is more than good!—Such a man will never fall in my way again.—It must come out. [*Approaching* Werner *bashfully.*] Mr. Sergeant!

Wer. [*Wiping his eyes.*] Well!

Fran. Mr. Sergeant——

Wer. What do you want, little woman?

Fran. Look at me, Mr. Sergeant.

Wer. I can't yet; there is something, I don't know what, in my eyes.

Fran. Now do look at me!

Wer. I am afraid I have looked at you too much already, little woman!—There, now I can see you. What then?

Fran. Mr. Sergeant—don't you want a Mrs. Sergeant?

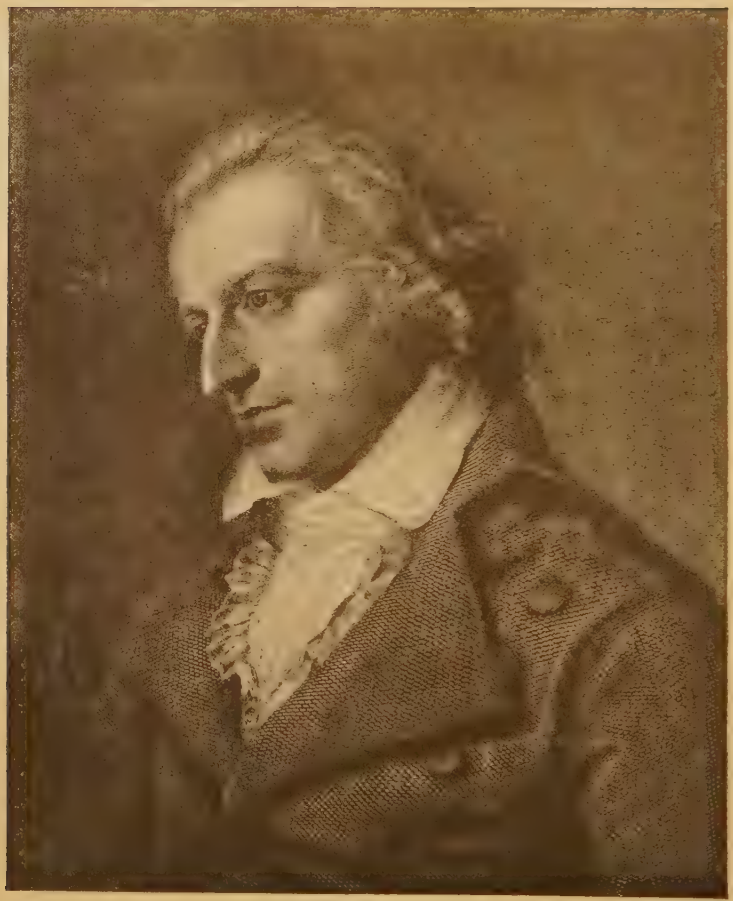
Wer. Do you really mean it, little woman?

Fran. Really I do.

Wer. And would you go with me to Persia even?

Fran. Wherever you please.

Wer. You will?—Hullo, Major, no boasting! At any rate I have got as good a wife, and as trusty a friend, as you.—Give me your hand, my little woman! It's a match! In ten years' time you shall be a general's wife, or a widow!



JOHANN CRISTOPH FRIEDRICH SCHILLER

From an engraving by A. Schultheiss

WILHELM TELL

BY

JOHANN CRISTOPH FRIEDRICH SCHILLER

Johann Cristoph Friedrich Schiller, German poet and dramatist, was born in Marbach-on-Neckar, November 10, 1759. His father was an army surgeon who had been promoted to a captaincy for his services in the Netherlands and Bohemia. From both his parents Schiller inherited a deep religious feeling and conscience. He received his early education at Marbach and at the grammar school of Ludwigsburg, and was instructed in religion by his father, who wished to make him a pastor. But Duke Carl Eugen of Würtemberg had established his school for army officers and public servants, and asked for young Schiller as a pupil. Schiller began the study of law, removed with Duke Carl to Stuttgart in 1775, and in 1776 changed his course to medicine. Here, in reading Klopstock's "Messias," he became aware of his own powers, and turned much of his attention to reading and to writing poetry and tragedies. Nevertheless, his studies were not neglected, and on December 14, 1779, in the presence of Goethe and Duke Carl August, he was awarded three medals for excellence in his profession, and one year afterward he was appointed surgeon to a Würtemberg regiment. On January 13, 1782, his first great play, "Die Rauber," was produced at Mannheim. Schiller was present at the performance, and Duke Carl had him arrested for leaving Stuttgart without permission, and upon his release forbade him to write plays or leave the capital. On September 22d Schiller fled in disguise, and for some time, as Dr. Ritter, he lay concealed at Mannheim and Oggersheim, and on Frau von Wolzogen's estate near Meiningen. Here he completed "Die Verschwörung Fiesco zu Genua" and "Kabale und Liebe." September 1, 1783, he became dramatist to the Mannheim Theatre, which place he held one year. He remained in Mannheim until 1785, editing "The Thalia," a dramatic periodical, then removed to Leipzig, where he made the friendship of Göschen, the publisher, and Körner, father of the poet. Here he produced "Don Carlos" in 1787. On the completion of his "Geschichte des Abfalls der Niederlande" (1788) he was awarded the chair of history at Jena, and received a small pension from the Duke of Saxe-Weimar. His marriage to Charlotte von Lengefield soon followed. Schiller had worked hard, and his health broke down, and after this time he wrote scarcely a line that was not the cause of intense suffering. In 1792 he finished his "Geschichte des Dreiszigjährigen Kriegs"; and in the same year came a free gift of three thousand gulden from the Duke of Augustenburg and Count Schimmelmann. In 1794 he made the acquaintance of Fichte and Von Humboldt, and began his lifelong friendship with Goethe. He settled at Weimar in 1799, and here produced his great dramas, beginning with "Wallenstein" (1799), the trilogy that Carlyle does not hesitate to pronounce "the greatest dramatic work of the eighteenth century," which was followed by "Maria Stuart" (1800), "Die Jungfrau von Orleans" (1801), "Die Braut von Messina" (1803), and "Wilhelm Tell" (1804). His health finally broke down, and he died, May 9, 1805, still a young man and in the prime of intellectual activity. Besides his dramatic works and the histories here mentioned, he wrote many beautiful poems and ballads, and other works in history, criticism, and fiction.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

HERMANN GESSLER, the Governor of Schwytz and Uri.

WERNER, Baron of Attinghausen, free noble of Switzerland.

ULRICH VON RUDENZ, his Nephew.

WERNER STAUFFACHER, CONRAD HUNN, HANS AUF DER MAUER, JORG IM HOFE, ULRICH DER SCHMIDT, JOST VON WEILER, ITEL REDING, — People of Schwytz.

WALTER FÜRST, WILHELM TELL, RÖSSELMANN, the Priest, PETERMANN, Sacristan, KUONI, Herdsman, WERNI, Huntsman, RUODI, Fisherman, — of Uri.

ARNOLD OF MELCHTHAL, CONRAD BAUMGARTEN, MEYER VON SARNEN, STRUTH VON WINKELRIED, KLAUS VON DER FLUE, BURKHART AM BUHEL, ARNOLD VON SEWA, — of Unterwald.

PFEIFFER OF LUCERNE.

KUNZ OF GERSAU.

JENNI, Fisherman's son.

SEPPI, Herdsman's son.

GERTRUDE, Stauffacher's wife.

HEDWIG, wife of Tell, daughter of Fürst.

BERTHA OF BRUNECK, a rich heiress.

ARMGART, MECHTHILD, ELSBETH, — Peasant women.

HILDEGARD.

WALTER, WILHELM, — Tell's sons.

FRIESSHARDT, LEUTHOLD, — Soldiers.

RUDOLPH DER HARRAS, Gessler's master of the horse.

JOHANNES PARRICIDA, Duke of Swabia.

STUSSI, Overseer.

THE MAYOR OF URI.

A COURIER.

MASTER STONEMASON, COMPANIONS, AND WORKMEN.

TASKMASTER.

A CRIER.

MONKS OF THE ORDER OF CHARITY.

HORSEMEN OF GESSLER AND LANDENBERG.

MANY PEASANTS; MEN AND WOMEN FROM THE WALDSTETTEN.

WILHELM TELL

ACT I

SCENE I.—A HIGH ROCKY SHORE OF THE LAKE OF LUCERNE OPPOSITE SCHWYTZ. THE LAKE MAKES A BEND INTO THE LAND; A HUT STANDS AT A SHORT DISTANCE FROM THE SHORE; THE FISHER BOY IS ROWING ABOUT IN HIS BOAT. BEYOND THE LAKE ARE SEEN THE GREEN MEADOWS, THE HAMLETS AND FARMS OF SCHWYTZ, LYING IN THE CLEAR SUNSHINE. ON THE LEFT ARE OBSERVED THE PEAKS OF THE HACKEN, SURROUNDED WITH CLOUDS; TO THE RIGHT, AND IN THE REMOTE DISTANCE, APPEAR THE GLACIERS. THE RANZ DES VACHES, AND THE TINKLING OF CATTLE BELLS, CONTINUE FOR SOME TIME AFTER THE RISING OF THE CURTAIN.

FISHER BOY [*Sings in his boat*]

Melody of the Ranz des Vaches

THE smile-dimpled lake wooed to bathe in its deep,
A boy on its green shore had laid him to sleep;
Then heard he a melody
Floating along,
Sweet as the notes
Of an angel's song.
And as thrilling with pleasure he wakes from his rest,
The waters are rippling over his breast;
And a voice from the deep cries,
"With me thou must go,
I charm the young shepherd,
I lure him below."

HERDSMAN [*On the mountains*]

Air.—Variation of the Ranz des Vaches

Farewell, ye green meadows,
Farewell, sunny shore,
The herdsman must leave you,
The summer is o'er.
We go to the hills, but you'll see us again,
When the cuckoo calls, and the merry birds sing,
When the flowers bloom afresh in glade and in glen,
And the brooks sparkle bright in the sunshine of spring.
Farewell, ye green meadows,
Farewell, sunny shore,
The herdsman must leave you,
The summer is o'er.

CHAMOIS-HUNTER [*Appearing on the top of a cliff*]

Second Variation of the Ranz des Vaches

On the heights peals the thunder, and trembles the bridge,
The huntsman bounds on by the dizzying ridge.
Undaunted he hies him
O'er ice-covered wild,
Where leaf never budded,
Nor Spring ever smiled;
And beneath him an ocean of mist, where his eye
No longer the dwellings of man can espy;
Through the parting clouds only
The earth can be seen,
Far down 'neath the vapour
The meadows of green.

[*A change comes over the landscape. A rumbling, cracking noise is heard among the mountains. Shadows of clouds sweep across the scene.*

[RUODI, *the fisherman, comes out of his cottage.* WERNI, *the huntsman, descends from the rocks.* KUONI, *the shepherd, enters, with a milk pail on his shoulders, followed by* SEPPI, *his assistant.*

Ruodi. Come, Jenni, bustle; get the boat on shore.
The grizzly Vale-King[1] comes, the Glaciers moan,
The Mytenstein[2] is drawing on his hood,
And from the Stormcleft chilly blows the wind;
The storm will burst, before we know what's what.
Kuoni. 'Twill rain ere long; my sheep browse eagerly,
And Watcher there is scraping up the earth.
Werni. The fish are leaping, and the water-hen
Keeps diving up and down. A storm is brewing.
Kuoni. [*To his boy.*] Look, Seppi, if the beasts be all in sight.
Seppi. There goes brown Liesel, I can hear her bells.
Kuoni. Then all are safe; she ever ranges farthest.
Ruodi. You've a fine chime of bells there, master herdsman.
Werni. And likely cattle, too. Are they your own?
Kuoni. I'm not so rich. They are the noble lord's
Of Attinghaus, and told off to my care.
Ruodi. How gracefully yon heifer bears her ribbon!
Kuoni. Ay, well she knows she's leader of the herd,
And, take it from her, she'd refuse to feed.
Ruodi. You're joking now. A beast devoid of reason——
Werni. Easily said. But beasts have reason, too—
And that we know, we chamois-hunters, well.
They never turn to feed—sagacious creatures!—
Till they have placed a sentinel ahead,
Who pricks his ears whenever we approach,
And gives alarm with clear and piercing pipe.
Ruodi. [*To the* SHEPHERD.] Are you for home?
Kuoni. The Alp is grazed quite bare.
Werni. A safe return, my friend!
Kuoni. The same to you!
Men come not always back from tracks like yours.
Ruodi. But who comes here, running at topmost speed?
Werni. I know the man; 'tis Baumgart of Alzellen.

[1] The German is, *Thalvogt*, Ruler of the Valley—the name given figuratively to a dense gray mist which the south wind sweeps into the valleys from the mountain tops. It is well known as the precursor of stormy weather.

[2] A steep rock, standing on the north of Rütli, and nearly opposite to Brumen.

Conrad Baumgarten. [*Rushing in breathless.*] For God's sake, ferryman, your boat!

Ruodi. How now?

Why all this haste?

Baum. Cast off! My life's at stake!

Set me across!

Kuoni. Why, what's the matter, friend?

Werni. Who are pursuing you? First tell us that.

Baum. [*To the* Fisherman.] Quick, quick, man, quick! they're close upon my heels!

It is the Viceroy's men are after me;

If they should overtake me, I am lost.

Ruodi. Why are the troopers in pursuit of you?

Baum. First make me safe and then I'll tell you all.

Werni. There's blood upon your garments—how is this?

Baum. The imperial Seneschal, who dwelt at Rossberg——

Kuoni. How! What! The Wolfshot![1] Is it he pursues you?

Baum. He'll ne'er hurt man again; I've settled him.

All. [*Starting back.*] Now, God forgive you! what is this you've done?

Baum. What every free man in my place had done.

Mine own good household right I have enforced

'Gainst him that would have wronged my wife—my honour.

Kuoni. How! Wronged you in your honour, did he so?

Baum. That he did not fulfil his foul desire,

Is due to God and to my trusty axe.

Werni. And you have cleft his skull, then, with your axe?

Kuoni. Oh, tell us all! You've time enough, and more,

While he is getting out the boat there from the beach.

Baum. When I was in the forest felling timber,

My wife came running out in mortal fear.

"The Seneschal," she said, "was in my house,

Had ordered her to get a bath prepared,

And thereupon had ta'en unseemly freedoms,

[1] In German, *Wolfenschiessen*—a young man of noble family, and a native of Unterwalden, who attached himself to the House of Austria, and was appointed *Burvogt*, or Seneschal, of the Castle of Rossberg. He was killed by Baumgarten in the manner, and for the cause, mentioned in the text.

From which she rid herself, and flew to me."
Armed as I was, I sought him, and my axe
Has given his bath a bloody benison.

Werni. And you did well; no man can blame the deed.

Kuoni. The tyrant! Now he has his just reward!
We men of Unterwald have owed it long.

Baum. The deed got wind, and now they're in pursuit.
Heavens! while we speak, the time is flying fast.

[*It begins to thunder.*

Kuoni. Quick, ferryman, and set the good man over.

Ruodi. Impossible! a storm is close at hand.
Wait till it pass! You must.

Baum. Almighty heavens!
I can not wait; the least delay is death.

Kuoni. [*To the* FISHERMAN.] Push out—God with you! We should help our neighbours;
The like misfortune may betide us all.

[*Thunder and the roaring of the wind.*

Ruodi. The South-wind's up![1] See how the lake is rising!
I can not steer against both wind and wave.

Baum. [*Clasping him by the knees.*] God so help you as now you pity me!

Werni. His life's at stake. Have pity on him, man!

Kuoni. He is a father: has a wife and children.

[*Repeated peals of thunder.*

Ruodi. What! and have I not, then, a life to lose,
A wife and child at home as well as he?
See how the breakers foam, and toss, and whirl,
And the lake eddies up from all its depths!
Right gladly would I save the worthy man,
But 'tis impossible, as you must see.

Baum. [*Still kneeling.*] Then must I fall into the tyrant's hands,

[1] Literally, The *Föhn* is loose! "When," says Müller, in his "History of Switzerland," "the wind called the Föhn is high, the navigation of the lake becomes extremely dangerous. Such is its vehemence, that the laws of the country require that the fires shall be extinguished in the houses while it lasts, and the night watches are doubled. The inhabitants lay heavy stones upon the roofs of their houses, to prevent their being blown away."

And with the shore of safety close in sight!
Yonder it lies! My eyes can see it clear,
My very voice can echo to its shores.
There is the boat to carry me across,
Yet must I lie here helpless and forlorn.

Kuoni. Look! who comes here?

Ruodi. 'Tis Tell, ay, Tell, of Bürglen.[1]

[*Enter* Tell *with a crossbow.*

Tell. What man is he that here implores for aid?

Kuoni. He is from Alzellen, and to guard his honour
From touch of foulest shame, has slain the Wolfshot,
The Imperial Seneschal, who dwelt at Rossberg.
The Viceroy's troopers are upon his heels;
He begs the ferryman to take him over,
But frightened at the storm he says he won't.

Ruodi. Well, there is Tell can steer as well as I.
He'll be my judge, if it be possible.

[*Violent peals of thunder—the lake becomes more tempestuous*
Am I to plunge into the jaws of hell?
I should be mad to dare the desperate act.

Tell. The brave man thinks upon himself the last.
Put trust in God, and help him in his need!

Ruodi. Safe in the port, 'tis easy to advise.
There is the boat, and there the lake! Try you!

Tell. The lake may pity, but the Viceroy never.
Come, risk it, man!

Shepherd and Huntsman. Oh, save him! save him! save him!

Ruodi. Though 'twere my brother, or my darling child,
I would not go. 'Tis Simon and Jude's day,
The lake is up, and calling for its victim.

Tell. Naught's to be done with idle talking here.
Each moment's precious; the man must be helped;
Say, boatman, will you venture?

Ruodi. No; not I.

Tell. In God's name, then, give me the boat! I will,
With my poor strength, see what is to be done!

Kuoni. Ha, gallant Tell!

[1] Bürglen, the birthplace and residence of Tell. A chapel, erected in 1522, remains on the spot formerly occupied by his house.

Werni. That's like a huntsman true.

Baum. You are my angel, my preserver, Tell.

Tell. I may preserve you from the Viceroy's power,
But from the tempest's rage another must.
Yet better 'tis you fall into God's hands,
Than into those of men. [*To the* HERDSMAN
Herdsman, do thou
Console my wife if I should come to grief.
I could not choose but do as I have done.
[*He leaps into the boat.*

Kuoni. [*To the* FISHERMAN.] A pretty man to keep a ferry, truly!
What Tell could risk, you dared not venture on.

Ruodi. Far better men would never cope with Tell.
There's no two such as he 'mong all our hills.

Werni. [*Who has ascended a rock.*] Now he is off.—God help thee, gallant sailor!
Look how the little boat reels on the waves!

Kuoni. [*On the shore.*] There! they have swept clean over it. And now
'Tis out of sight. Yet stay, there 'tis again!
Stoutly he stems the breakers, noble fellow!

Seppi. Here come the troopers hard as they can ride!

Kuoni. Heavens! so they do! Why, that was help, indeed.
[*Enter a troop of* HORSEMEN.

1st H. Give up the murderer! You have him here!

2d H. This way he came! 'Tis useless to conceal him!

Ruodi and Kuoni. Whom do you mean?

1st H. [*Discovering the boat.*] The devil! What do I see?

Werni. [*From above.*] Is't he in yonder boat ye seek? Ride on;
If you lay to, you may o'ertake him yet.

2d H. Curse on you, he's escaped!

1st H. [*To the* SHEPHERD *and* FISHERMAN.] You helped him off,
And you shall pay for it!—Fall on their herds!
Down with the cottage! burn it! beat it down!
[*They rush off.*

Seppi. [*Hurrying after them.*] Oh, my poor lambs!

Kuoni. [*Following him.*] Unhappy me, my herds!
Werni. The tyrants!
Ruodi. [*Wringing his hands.*] Righteous Heaven! Oh, when will come
Deliverance to this doom-devoted land? [*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II.—A LIME TREE IN FRONT OF STAUFFACHER'S HOUSE AT STEINEN, IN SCHWYTZ, UPON THE PUBLIC ROAD, NEAR A BRIDGE

Werner Stauffacher *and* Pfeiffer, *of Lucerne, enter into conversation*

Pfeiff. Ay, ay, friend Stauffacher, as I have said,
Swear not to Austria, if you can help it.
Hold by the Empire stoutly as of yore,
And God preserve you in your ancient freedom!
[*Presses his hand warmly and is going.*
Stauff. Wait till my mistress comes. Now do! You are
My guest in Schwytz—I in Lucerne am yours.
Pfeiff. Thanks! thanks! But I must reach Gersau to-day.
Whatever grievances your rulers' pride
And grasping avarice may yet inflict,
Bear them in patience—soon a change may come.
Another Emperor may mount the throne.
But Austria's once, and you are hers forever. [*Exit.*

[Stauffacher *sits down sorrowfully upon a bench under the lime tree.* Gertrude, *his wife, enters, and finds him in this posture. She places herself near him, and looks at him for some time in silence.*

Gert. So sad, my love! I scarcely know thee now.
For many a day in silence I have marked
A moody sorrow furrowing thy brow.
Some silent grief is weighing on thy heart.
Trust it to me. I am thy faithful wife,
And I demand my half of all thy cares.
[Stauffacher *gives her his hand and is silent.*
Tell me what can oppress thy spirits thus?
Thy toil is blest—the world goes well with thee—
Our barns are full—our cattle, many a score;

Our handsome team of well-fed horses, too,
Brought from the mountain pastures safely home,
To winter in their comfortable stalls.
There stands thy house—no nobleman's more fair!
'Tis newly built with timber of the best,
All grooved and fitted with the nicest skill;
Its many glistening windows tell of comfort!
'Tis quartered o'er with scutcheons of all hues,
And proverbs sage, which passing travellers
Linger to read, and ponder o'er their meaning.

Stauff. The house is strongly built, and handsomely,
But, ah! the ground on which we built it quakes.

Gert. Tell me, dear Werner, what you mean by that?

Stauff. No later gone than yesterday, I sat
Beneath this linden, thinking with delight
How fairly all was finished, when from Küssnacht
The Viceroy and his men came riding by.
Before this house he halted in surprise:
At once I rose, and, as beseemed his rank,
Advanced respectfully to greet the lord,
To whom the Emperor delegates his power,
As judge supreme within our Canton here.
"Who is the owner of this house?" he asked,
With mischief in his thoughts, for well he knew.
With prompt decision, thus I answered him:
"The Emperor, your grace—my lord and yours,
And held by me in fief." On this he answered,
"I am the Emperor's viceregent here,
And will not that each peasant churl should build
At his own pleasure, bearing him as freely
As though he were the master in the land.
I shall make bold to put a stop to this!"
So saying, he, with menaces, rode off,
And left me musing with a heavy heart
On the fell purpose that his words betrayed.

Gert. My own dear lord and husband! Wilt thou take
A word of honest counsel from thy wife?
I boast to be the noble Iberg's child,
A man of wide experience. Many a time,

As we sat spinning in the winter nights,
My sisters and myself, the people's chiefs
Were wont to gather round our father's hearth,
To read the old imperial charters, and
To hold sage converse on the country's weal.
Then heedfully I listened, marking well
What now the wise man thought, the good man wished,
And garnered up their wisdom in my heart.
Hear then, and mark me well; for thou wilt see,
I long have known the grief that weighs thee down.
The Viceroy hates thee, fain would injure thee,
For thou hast crossed his wish to bend the Swiss
In homage to this upstart house of princes,
And kept them stanch, like their good sires of old,
In true allegiance to the Empire. Say,
Is't not so, Werner? Tell me, am I wrong?

Stauff. 'Tis even so. For this doth Gessler hate me.

Gert. He burns with envy, too, to see thee living
Happy and free on thine ancestral soil,
For he is landless. From the Emperor's self
Thou hold'st in fief the lands thy fathers left thee.
There's not a prince i' the Empire that can show
A better title to his heritage;
For thou hast over thee no lord but one,
And he the mightiest of all Christian kings.
Gessler, we know, is but a younger son,
His only wealth the knightly cloak he wears;
He therefore views an honest man's good fortune
With a malignant and a jealous eye.
Long has he sworn to compass thy destruction.
As yet thou art uninjured. Wilt thou wait,
Till he may safely give his malice vent?
A wise man would anticipate the blow.

Stauff. What's to be done?

Gert. Now hear what I advise.
Thou knowest well, how here with us in Schwytz
All worthy men are groaning underneath
This Gessler's grasping, grinding tyranny.
Doubt not the men of Unterwald as well,

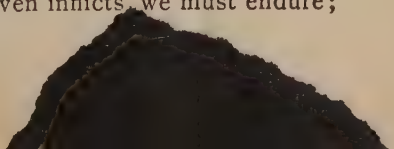
And Uri, too, are chafing like ourselves,
At this oppressive and heart-wearying yoke.
For there, across the lake, the Landenberg
Wields the same iron rule as Gessler here—
No fishing-boat comes over to our side,
But brings the tidings of some new encroachment,
Some fresh outrage, more grievous than the last.
Then it were well, that some of you—true men—
Men sound at heart, should secretly devise
How best to shake this hateful thraldom off.
Full sure I am that God would not desert you,
But lend His favour to the righteous cause.
Hast thou no friend in Uri, one to whom
Thou frankly may'st unbosom all thy thoughts?

Stauff. I know full many a gallant fellow there,
And nobles, too—great men, of high repute,
In whom I can repose unbounded trust. [*Rising.*
Wife! What a storm of wild and perilous thoughts
Hast thou stirred up within my tranquil breast!
The darkest musings of my bosom thou
Hast dragged to light, and placed them full before me;
And what I scarce dared harbour e'en in thought,
Thou speakest plainly out with fearless tongue.
But hast thou weighed well what thou urgest thus?
Discord will come, and the fierce clang of arms,
To scare this valley's long-unbroken peace,
If we, a feeble shepherd race, shall dare
Him to the fight, that lords it o'er the world.
Even now they only wait some fair pretext
For setting loose their savage warrior hordes,
To scourge and ravage this devoted land,
To lord it o'er us with the victor's rights,
And, 'neath the show of lawful chastisement,
Despoil us of our chartered liberties.

Gert. You, too, are men; can wield a battle axe
As well as they. God ne'er deserts the brave.

Stauff. O wife! a horrid, ruthless fiend is war,
That smites at once the shepherd and his flock.

Gert. Whate'er great Heaven inflicts, we must endure;



But wrong is what no noble heart will bear.
Stauff. This house—thy pride—war, unrelenting war
Will burn it down.
Gert. And did I think this heart
Enslaved and fettered to the things of earth,
With my own hand I'd hurl the kindling torch.
Stauff. Thou hast faith in human kindness, wife; but war
Spares not the tender infant in its cradle.
Gert. There is a Friend to innocence in heaven.
Send your gaze forward, Werner—not behind.
Stauff. We men may die like men, with sword in hand;
But oh, what fate, my Gertrude, may be thine?
Gert. None are so weak, but one last choice is left.
A spring from yonder bridge and I am free!
Stauff. [*Embracing her.*] Well may he fight for hearth and home, that clasps
A heart so rare as thine against his own!
What are the host of Emperors to him?
Gertrude, farewell! I will to Uri straight.
There lives my worthy comrade, Walter Fürst;
His thoughts and mine upon these times are one.
There, too, resides the noble Banneret
Of Attinghaus. High though of blood he be,
He loves the people, honours their old customs.
With both of these I will take counsel how
To rid us bravely of our country's foe.
Farewell! and while I am away, bear thou
A watchful eye in management at home.
The pilgrim journeying to the house of God,
And holy friar, collecting for his cloister,
To these give liberally from purse and garner.
Stauffacher's house would not be hid. Right out
Upon the public way it stands, and offers
To all that pass a hospitable roof.

[*While they are retiring*, Tell *enters with* Baumgarten.

Tell. Now, then, you have no further need of me.
Enter yon house. 'Tis Werner Stauffacher's,
A man that is a father to distress.
See, there he is, himself! Come, follow me.

[*They retire up. Scene changes.*

SCENE III.—A COMMON NEAR ALTDORF. ON AN EMINENCE IN THE BACKGROUND A CASTLE IN PROGRESS OF ERECTION, AND SO FAR ADVANCED THAT THE OUTLINE OF THE WHOLE MAY BE DISTINGUISHED. THE BACK PART IS FINISHED: MEN ARE WORKING AT THE FRONT. SCAFFOLDING, ON WHICH THE WORKMEN ARE GOING UP AND DOWN. A SLATER IS SEEN UPON THE HIGHEST PART OF THE ROOF. ALL IS BUSTLE AND ACTIVITY

TASKMASTER, MASON, WORKMEN, LABOURERS

Task. [*With a stick, urging on the workmen.*] Up, up! You've rested long enough. To work!
The stones here! Now the mortar, and the lime!
And let his lordship see the work advanced,
When next he comes. These fellows crawl like snails!
[*To two* LABOURERS, *with loads.*
What! call ye that a load? Go, double it.
Is this the way ye earn your wages, laggards?
1st W. 'Tis very hard that we must bear the stones,
To make a keep and dungeon for ourselves!
Task. What's that you mutter? 'Tis a worthless race,
For nothing fit but just to milk their cows,
And saunter idly up and down the hills.
Old Man. [*Sinks down exhausted.*] I can no more.
Task. [*Shaking him.*] Up, up, old man, to work!
1st W. Have you no bowels of compassion, thus
To press so hard upon a poor old man,
That scarce can drag his feeble limbs along?
Master Mason and Workmen. Shame, shame upon you—shame! It cries to Heaven.
Task. Mind your own business. I but do my duty.
1st W. Pray, master, what's to be the name of this
Same castle, when 'tis built?
Task. The Keep of Uri;
For by it we shall keep you in subjection.
Work. The Keep of Uri?
Task. Well, why laugh at that?
2d W. Keep Uri, will you, with this paltry place!
1st W. How many molehills such as that must first

Be piled up each on each, ere you make
A mountain equal to the least in Uri?

[TASKMASTER *retires up the stage.*

Mas. M. I'll drown the mallet in the deepest lake,
That served my hand on this accursed pile.

[*Enter* TELL *and* STAUFFACHER.

Stauff. O that I had not lived to see this sight!

Tell. Here 'tis not good to be. Let us proceed.

Stauff. Am I in Uri—Uri, freedom's home?

Mas. M. O sir, if you could only see the vaults
Beneath these towers! The man that tenants them
Will ne'er hear cock crow more.

Stauff. O God! O God!

Mason. Look at these ramparts and these buttresses,
That seem as they were built to last forever.

Tell. What hands have built, my friend, hands can destroy.

[*Pointing to the mountains.*

That home of freedom God hath built for us.

[*A drum is heard. People enter bearing a cap upon a pole, followed by a crier. Women and children thronging tumultuously after them.*

1st W. What means the drum? Give heed!

Mason. Why, here's a mumming!
And look, the cap—what can they mean by that?

Crier. In the Emperor's name, give ear!

Work. Hush! silence! hush!

Crier. Ye men of Uri, ye do see this cap!
It will be set upon a lofty pole
In Altdorf, in the market place: and this
Is the Lord Governor's good will and pleasure;
The cap shall have like honour as himself,
All do it reverence with bended knee,
And head uncovered; thus the King will know
Who are his true and loyal subjects here;
His life and goods are forfeit to the crown
That shall refuse obedience to the order.

[*The people burst out into laughter. The drum beats and the procession passes on.*

1st W. A strange device to fall upon indeed:

Do reverence to a cap! A pretty farce!
Heard ever mortal anything like this?
Mas. M. Down to a cap on bended knee, forsooth!
Rare jesting this with men of sober sense!
1st W. Nay, an it were the imperial crown! A cap!
Merely the cap of Austria! I've seen it
Hanging above the throne in Gessler's hall.
Mason. The cap of Austria? Mark that! A snare
To get us into Austria's power, by Heaven!
Work. No freeborn man will stoop to such disgrace.
Mas. M. Come—to our comrades, and advise with them!
[*They retire up.*
Tell. [*To* STAUFFACHER.] You see how matters stand.
Farewell, my friend!
Stauff. Whither away? Oh, leave us not so soon.
Tell. They look for me at home. So fare ye well.
Stauff. My heart's so full, and has so much to tell you!
Tell. Words will not make a heart that's heavy light.
Stauff. Yet words may possibly conduct to deeds.
Tell. Endure in silence! We can do no more.
Stauff. But shall we bear what is not to be borne?
Tell. Impetuous rulers have the shortest reigns.
When the fierce South-wind rises from his chasms,
Men cover up their fires, the ships in haste
Make for the harbour, and the mighty spirit
Sweeps o'er the earth, and leaves no trace behind.
Let every man live quietly at home;
Peace to the peaceful rarely is denied.
Stauff. And is it thus you view our grievances?
Tell. The serpent stings not till it is provoked.
Let them alone; they'll weary of themselves,
When they shall see we are not to be roused.
Stauff. Much might be done—did we stand fast together.
Tell. When the ship founders, he will best escape
Who seeks no other's safety but his own.
Stauff. And you desert the common cause so coldly?
Tell. A man can safely count but on himself!
Stauff. Nay, even the weak grow strong by union.
Tell. But the strong man is strongest when alone.

Stauff. So, then, your country can not count on you,
If in despair she rise against her foes.

Tell. Tell rescues the lost sheep from yawning gulfs:
Is he a man, then, to desert his friends?
Yet, whatsoe'er you do, spare me from council!
I was not born to ponder and select;
But when your course of action is resolved,
Then call on Tell: you shall not find him fail.

[*Exeunt severally. A sudden tumult is heard around the scaffolding.*

Mason. [*Running in.*] What's wrong?

1st Workman. [*Running forward.*] The slater's fallen from the roof.

Bertha. [*Rushing in.*] Heavens! Is he dashed to pieces? Save him, help!
If help be possible, save him! Here is gold.

[*Throws her trinkets among the people.*

Mason. Hence with your gold—your universal charm,
And remedy for ill! When you have torn
Fathers from children, husbands from their wives,
And scattered woe and wail throughout the land,
You think with gold to compensate for all.
Hence! Till we saw you, we were happy men;
With you came misery and dark despair.

Bertha. [*To the* TASKMASTER, *who has returned.*] Lives he?

[TASKMASTER *shakes his head.*

Ill-omened towers, with curses built,
And doomed with curses to be tenanted! [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.—THE HOUSE OF WALTER FÜRST

WALTER FÜRST *and* ARNOLD VON MELCHTHAL *enter simultaneously at different sides*

Melch. Good Walter Fürst.

Fürst. If we should be surprised!
Stay where you are. We are beset with spies.

Melch. Have you no news for me from Unterwald?
What of my father? 'Tis not to be borne,
Thus to be pent up like a felon here!

What have I done so heinous that I must
Skulk here in hiding, like a murderer?
I only laid my staff across the fists
Of the pert varlet, when before my eyes,
By order of the governor, he tried
To drive away my handsome team of oxen.

Fürst. You are too rash by far. He did no more
Than what the governor had ordered him.
You had transgressed, and therefore should have paid
The penalty, however hard, in silence.

Melch. Was I to brook the fellow's saucy gibe,
"That if the peasant must have bread to eat,
Why, let him go and draw the plough himself!"
It cut me to the very soul to see
My oxen, noble creatures, when the knave
Unyoked them from the plough. As though they felt
The wrong, they lowed and butted with their horns.
On this I could contain myself no longer,
And, overcome by passion, struck him down.

Fürst. Oh, we old men can scarce command ourselves!
And can we wonder youth breaks out of bounds?

Melch. I'm only sorry for my father's sake!
To be away from him, that needs so much
My fostering care! The governor detests him,
Because, whene'er occasion served, he has
Stood stoutly up for right and liberty.
Therefore they'll bear him hard—the poor old man!
And there is none to shield him from their gripe.
Come what come may, I must go home again.

Fürst. Compose yourself, and wait in patience till
We get some tidings o'er from Unterwald.
Away! away! I hear a knock! Perhaps
A message from the Viceroy! Get thee in!
You are not safe from Landenberger's[1] arm
In Uri, for these tyrants pull together.

[1] Berenger von Landenberg, a man of noble family in Thurgau, and Governor of Unterwald, infamous for his cruelties to the Swiss, and particularly to the venerable Henry of the Halden. He was slain at the battle of Morgarten, in 1315.

Melch. They teach us Switzers what we ought to do.

Fürst. Away! I'll call you when the coast is clear.

[MELCHTHAL *retires.*

Unhappy youth! I dare not tell him all
The evil that my boding heart predicts!—
Who's there? The door ne'er opens, but I look
For tidings of mishap. Suspicion lurks
With darkling treachery in every nook.
Even to our inmost rooms they force their way,
These myrmidons of power; and soon we'll need
To fasten bolts and bars upon our doors.

[*He opens the door, and steps back in surprise as* WERNER STAUFFACHER *enters.*

What do I see? You, Werner? Now, by Heaven!
A valued guest, indeed. No man e'er set
His foot across this threshold, more esteemed,
Welcome! thrice welcome, Werner, to my roof!
What brings you here? What seek you here in Uri?

Stauff. [*Shakes* FÜRST *by the hand.*] The olden times and olden Switzerland.

Fürst. You bring them with you. See how glad I am!
My heart leaps at the very sight of you.
Sit down—sit down, and tell me how you left
Your charming wife, fair Gertrude? Iberg's child,
And clever as her father. Not a man,
That wends from Germany, by Meinrad's Cell,[1]
To Italy, but praises far and wide
Your house's hospitality. But say,
Have you come here direct from Flüelen,
And have you noticed nothing on your way,
Before you halted at my door?

Stauff. [*Sits down.*] I saw
A work in progress, as I came along,
I little thought to see—that likes me ill.

Fürst. O friend! you've lighted on my thought at once.

Stauff. Such things in Uri ne'er were known before.

[1] A cell built in the ninth century, by Meinrad, Count of Hohenzollern, the founder of the Convent of Einsiedeln, subsequently alluded to in the text.

Never was prison here in man's remembrance,
Nor ever any stronghold but the grave.

Fürst. You name it well. It is the grave of freedom.

Stauff. Friend, Walter Fürst, I will be plain with you.
No idle curiosity it is
That brings me here, but heavy cares. I left
Thraldom at home, and thraldom meets me here.
Our wrongs, e'en now, are more than we can bear,
And who shall tell us where they are to end?
From eldest time the Switzer has been free,
Accustomed only to the mildest rule.
Such things as now we suffer ne'er were known,
Since herdsman first drove cattle to the hills.

Fürst. Yes, our oppressions are unparalleled!
Why, even our own good lord of Attinghaus,
Who lived in olden times, himself declares
They are no longer to be tamely borne.

Stauff. In Unterwalden yonder 'tis the same;
And bloody has the retribution been.
The imperial Seneschal, the Wolfshot, who
At Rossberg dwelt, longed for forbidden fruit—
Baumgarten's wife, that lives at Alzellen,
He tried to make a victim to his lust,
On which the husband slew him with his axe.

Fürst. Oh, Heaven is just in all its judgments still!
Baumgarten, say you? A most worthy man.
Has he escaped, and is he safely hid?

Stauff. Your son-in-law conveyed him o'er the lake,
And he lies hidden in my house at Steinen.
He brought the tidings with him of a thing
That has been done at Sarnen, worse than all,
A thing to make the very heart run blood!

Fürst. [*Attentively.*] Say on. What is it?

Stauff. There dwells in Melchthal, then,
Just as you enter by the road from Kerns,
An upright man, named Henry of the Halden,
A man of weight and influence in the Diet.

Fürst. Who knows him not? But what of him? Proceed.

Stauff. The Landenberg, to punish some offence

Committed by the old man's son, it seems,
Had given command to take the youth's best pair
Of oxen from his plough; on which the lad
Struck down the messenger and took to flight.

Fürst. But the old father—tell me, what of him?

Stauff. The Landenberg sent for him, and required
He should produce his son upon the spot;
And when the old man protested, and with truth,
That he knew nothing of the fugitive,
The tyrant called his torturers.

Fürst. [*Springs up and tries to lead him to the other side.*]
Hush! no more!

Stauff. [*With increasing warmth.*] "And though thy son,"
he cried, "has 'scaped me now,
I have thee fast, and thou shalt feel my vengeance."
With that they flung the old man to the ground,
And plunged the pointed steel into his eyes.

Fürst. Merciful Heaven!

Melch. [*Rushing out.*] Into his eyes, his eyes?

Stauff. [*Addresses himself in astonishment to* Walter Fürst.]
Who is this youth?

Melch. [*Grasping him convulsively.*] Into his eyes? Speak,
speak!

Fürst. Oh, miserable hour!

Stauff. Who is it, tell me?
[Stauffacher *makes a sign to him.*
It is his son! All-righteous Heaven!

Melch. And I
Must be from thence! What! into both his eyes?

Fürst. Be calm, be calm; and bear it like a man!

Melch. And all for me—for my mad, wilful folly!
Blind, did you say? Quite blind—and both his eyes?

Stauff. Ev'n so. The fountain of his sight is quenched,
He ne'er will see the blessed sunshine more.

Fürst. Oh, spare his anguish!

Melch. Never, never more!

[*Presses his hands upon his eyes and is silent for some moments; then, turning from one to the other, speaks in a subdued tone, broken by sobs.*

O the eye's light, of all the gifts of Heaven,
The dearest, best! From light all beings live—
Each fair created thing—the very plants
Turn with a joyful transport to the light;
And he—he must drag on through all his days
In endless darkness! Never more for him
The sunny meads shall glow, the flow'rets bloom;
Nor shall he more behold the roseate tints
Of the iced mountain top! To die is nothing.
But to have life, and not have sight—oh, that
Is misery indeed! Why do you look
So piteously at me? I have two eyes,
Yet to my poor blind father can give neither!
No, not one gleam of that great sea of light,
That with its dazzling splendour floods my gaze.

Stauff. Ah, I must swell the measure of your grief,
Instead of soothing it. The worst, alas!
Remains to tell. They've stripped him of his all;
Naught have they left him, save his staff, on which,
Blind, and in rags, he moves from door to door.

Melch. Naught but his staff to the old eyeless man!
Stripped of his all—even of the light of day,
The common blessing of the meanest wretch?
Tell me no more of patience, of concealment!
Oh, what a base and coward thing am I,
That on mine own security I thought,
And took no care of thine! Thy precious head
Left as a pledge within the tyrant's grasp!
Hence, craven-hearted prudence, hence! And all
My thoughts be vengeance, and the despot's blood!
I'll seek him straight—no power shall stay me now—
And at his hands demand my father's eyes.
I'll beard him 'mid a thousand myrmidons!
What's life to me, if in his heart's best blood
I cool the fever of this mighty anguish? [*He is going.*

Fürst. Stay; this is madness, Melchthal! What avails
Your single arm against his power? He sits
At Sarnen high within his lordly keep,
And, safe within its battlemented walls,

May laugh to scorn your unavailing rage.

Melch. And though he sat within the icy domes
Of yon far Schreckhorn—ay, or higher, where,
Veiled since eternity, the Jungfrau soars,
Still to the tyrant would I make my way;
With twenty comrades minded like myself,
I'd lay his fastness level with the earth!
And if none follow me, and if you all,
In terror for your homesteads and your herds,
Bow in submission to the tyrant's yoke,
Round me I'll call the herdsmen on the hills,
And there beneath heaven's free and boundless roof,
Where men still feel as men, and hearts are true,
Proclaim aloud this foul enormity!

Stauff. [*To* FÜRST.] The measure's full—and are we then to wait
Till some extremity——

Melch. Peace! What extremity
Remains for us to dread? What, when our eyes
No longer in their sockets are secure?
Heavens! Are we helpless? Wherefore did we learn
To bend the crossbow—wield the battle-axe?
What living creature but in its despair
Finds for itself a weapon of defence?
The baited stag will turn, and with the show
Of his dread antlers hold the hounds at bay;
The chamois drags the huntsman down th' abyss;
The very ox, the partner of man's toil,
The sharer of his roof, that meekly bends
The strength of his huge neck beneath the yoke,
Springs up, if he's provoked, whets his strong horn,
And tosses his tormentor to the clouds.

Fürst. If the three Cantons thought as we three do,
Something might then be done, with good effect.

Stauff. When Uri calls, when Unterwald replies,
Schwytz will be mindful of her ancient league.[1]

[1] The League, or Bond, of the three Cantons was of very ancient origin. They met and renewed it from time to time, especially when their liberties were threatened with danger. A remarkable instance of this occurred in

Melch. I've many friends in Unterwald, and none
That would not gladly venture life and limb,
If fairly backed and aided by the rest.
Oh! sage and reverend fathers of this land,
Here do I stand before your riper years,
An unskilled youth, who in the Diet must
Into respectful silence hush his voice.
Yet do not, for that I am young, and want
Experience, slight my counsel and my words.
'Tis not the wantonness of youthful blood

the end of the thirteenth century, when Albert, of Austria, became Emperor, and when, possibly, for the first time, the Bond was reduced to writing. As it is important to the understanding of many passages of the play, a translation is subjoined of the oldest known document relating to it. The original, which is in Latin and German, is dated in August, 1291, and is under the seals of the whole of the men of Schwytz, the commonalty of the vale of Uri and the whole of the men of the upper and lower vales of Stanz.

THE BOND

Be it known to every one, that the men of the Dale of Uri, the Community of Schwytz, as also the men of the mountains of Unterwald, in consideration of the evil times, have full confidently bound themselves, and sworn to help each other with all their power and might, property and people, against all who shall do violence to them, or any of them. That is our Ancient Bond.

Whoever hath a Seignior, let him obey according to the conditions of his service.

We are agreed to receive into these dales no judge, who is not a countryman and indweller, or who hath bought his place.

Every controversy among the sworn confederates shall be determined by some of the sagest of their number, and if any one shall challenge their judgment, then shall he be constrained to obey it by the rest.

Whoever intentionally or deceitfully kills another, shall be executed, and whoever shelters him shall be banished.

Whoever burns the property of another shall no longer be regarded as a countryman, and whoever shelters him shall make good the damage done.

Whoever injures another, or robs him, and hath property in our country, shall make satisfaction out of the same.

No one shall distrain a debtor without a judge, nor any one who is not his debtor, or the surety for such debtor.

Every one in these dales shall submit to the judge, or we, the sworn confederates, all will take satisfaction for all the injury occasioned by his contumacy. And if in any internal division the one party will not accept justice, all the rest shall help the other party. These decrees shall, God willing, endure eternally for our general advantage.

That fires my spirit; but a pang so deep
That e'en the flinty rocks must pity me.
You, too, are fathers, heads of families,
And you must wish to have a virtuous son,
To reverence your gray hairs, and shield your eyes
With pious and affectionate regard.
Do not, I pray, because in limb and fortune
You still are unassailed, and still your eyes
Revolve undimmed and sparkling in their spheres—
Oh, do not, therefore, disregard our wrongs!
Above you, also, hangs the tyrant's sword.
You, too, have striven to alienate the land
From Austria. This was all my father's crime:
You share his guilt, and may his punishment.

Stauff. [*To* Fürst.] Do thou resolve! I am prepared to follow.

Fürst. First let us learn what steps the noble lords
Von Sillinen and Attinghaus propose.
Their names would rally thousands to the cause.

Melch. Is there a name within the Forest Mountains
That carries more respect than yours—and yours?
On names like these the people build their trust
In time of need—such names are household words.
Rich was your heritage of manly worth,
And richly have you added to its stores.
What need of nobles? Let us do the work
Ourselves. Yes, though we have to stand alone,
We shall be able to maintain our rights.

Stauff. The nobles' wrongs are not so great as ours.
The torrent, that lays waste the lower grounds,
Hath not ascended to the uplands yet.
But let them see the country once in arms,
They'll not refuse to lend a helping hand.

Fürst. Were there an umpire 'twixt ourselves and Austria,
Justice and law might then decide our quarrel.
But our oppressor is our emperor too,
And judge supreme. 'Tis God must help us, then,
And our own arm! Be yours the task to rouse
The men of Schwytz; I'll rally friends in Uri.

But whom are we to send to Unterwald?

Melch. Thither send me. Whom should it more concern?

Fürst. No, Melchthal, no; you are my guest, and I
Must answer for your safety.

Melch. Let me go.
I know each forest track and mountain path;
Friends too, I'll find, be sure, on every hand,
To give me willing shelter from the foe.

Stauff. Nay, let him go; no traitors harbour there:
For tyranny is so abhorred in Unterwald,
No tools can there be found to work her will.
In the low valleys, too, the Alzeller
Will gain confederates, and rouse the country.

Melch. But how shall we communicate, and not
Awaken the suspicion of the tyrants?

Stauff. Might we not meet at Brunnen or at Treib,
Where merchant vessels with their cargoes come?

Fürst. We must not go so openly to work.
Hear my opinion. On the lake's left bank,
As we sail hence to Brunnen, right against
The Mytenstein, deep-hidden in the wood
A meadow lies, by shepherds called the Rootli,
Because the wood has been uprooted there.
'Tis where our Canton bound'ries verge on yours—
[*To* MELCHTHAL.
Your boat will carry you across from Schwytz.
[*To* STAUFFACHER.
Thither by lonely bypaths let us wend
At midnight, and deliberate o'er our plans.
Let each bring with him there ten trusty men,
All one at heart with us; and then we may
Consult together for the general weal,
And, with God's guidance, fix what next to do.

Stauff. So let it be. And now your true right hand!—
Yours, too, young man!—and as we now three men
Among ourselves thus knit our hands together
In all sincerity and truth, e'en so
Shall we three Cantons, too, together stand
In victory and defeat, in life and death.

Fürst and Melch. In life and death!

[*They hold their hands clasped together for some moments in silence.*

Melch. Alas! my old blind father!
The day of freedom, that thou canst not see,
But thou shalt hear it, when from Alp to Alp
The beacon fires throw up their flaming signs,
And the proud castles of the tyrants fall,
Into thy cottage shall the Switzer burst,
Bear the glad tidings to thine ear, and o'er
Thy darkened way shall Freedom's radiance pour.

ACT II

SCENE I.—THE MANSION OF THE BARON OF ATTINGHAUSEN. A GOTHIC HALL, DECORATED WITH ESCUTCHEONS AND HELMETS. THE BARON, A GRAY-HEADED MAN, EIGHTY-FIVE YEARS OLD, TALL AND OF A COMMANDING MIEN, CLAD IN A FURRED PELISSE, AND LEANING ON A STAFF TIPPED WITH CHAMOIS HORN. KUONI AND SIX HINDS STANDING ROUND HIM WITH RAKES AND SCYTHES. ULRICH OF RUDENZ ENTERS IN THE COSTUME OF A KNIGHT

RUDENZ. Uncle, I'm here! Your will?

Attinghausen. First let me share,
After the ancient custom of our house,
The morning cup, with these my faithful servants!

[*He drinks from a cup, which is then passed round.*

Time was, I stood myself in field and wood,
With mine own eyes directing all their toil,
Even as my banner led them in the fight.
Now I am only fit to play the steward:
And, if the genial sun come not to me,
I can no longer seek it on the hills.
Thus slowly, in an ever-narrowing sphere,
I move on to the narrowest and the last,
Where all life's pulses cease. I now am but

The shadow of my former self, and that
Is fading fast—'twill soon be but a name.

Kuoni. [*Offering* RUDENZ *the cup.*] A pledge, young master!
[RUDENZ *hesitates to take the cup.*
Nay, sir, drink it off!
One cup, one heart! You know our proverb, sir?

Atting. Go, children, and at eve, when work is done,
We'll meet and talk the country's business over.
[*Exeunt* SERVANTS.
Belted and plumed, and all thy bravery on!
Thou art for Altdorf—for the castle, boy?

Rud. Yes, uncle. Longer may I not delay——

Atting. [*Sitting down.*] Why in such haste? Say, are thy youthful hours
Doled in such niggard measure, that thou must
Be chary of them to thy aged uncle?

Rud. I see my presence is not needed here;
I am but as a stranger in this house.

Atting. [*Gazes fixedly at him for a considerable time.*] Ay, pity 'tis thou art! Alas! that home
To thee has grown so strange! O Uly! Uly!
I scarce do know thee now, thus decked in silks,
The peacock's feather[1] flaunting in thy cap,
And purple mantle round thy shoulders flung;
Thou look'st upon the peasant with disdain;
And tak'st his honest greeting with a blush.

Rud. All honour due to him I gladly pay,
But must deny the right he would usurp.

Atting. The sore displeasure of its monarch rests
Upon our land, and every true man's heart
Is full of sadness for the grievous wrongs
We suffer from our tyrants. Thou alone
Art all unmoved amid the general grief.
Abandoning thy friends, thou tak'st thy stand
Beside thy country's foes, and, as in scorn

[1] The Austrian knights were in the habit of wearing a plume of peacock's feathers in their helmets. After the overthrow of the Austrian dominion in Switzerland, it was made highly penal to wear the peacock's feather at any public assembly there.

Of our distress, pursuest giddy joys,
Courting the smiles of princes all the while
Thy country bleeds beneath their cruel scourge.
Rud. The land is sore oppressed, I know it, uncle.
But why? Who plunged it into this distress?
A word, one little easy word, might buy
Instant deliverance from all our ills,
And win the good will of the Emperor.
Woe unto those who seal the people's eyes,
And make them adverse to their country's good—
The men who, for their own vile, selfish ends,
Are seeking to prevent the Forest States
From swearing fealty to Austria's House,
As all the countries round about have done!
It fits their humour well to take their seats
Amid the nobles on the Herrenbank;[1]
They'll have the Kaiser for their lord, forsooth—
That is to say, they'll have no lord at all.
Atting. Must I hear this, and from thy lips, rash boy?
Rud. You urged me to this answer. Hear me out.
What, uncle, is the character you've stooped
To fill contentedly through life? Have you
No higher pride than in these lonely wilds
To be the Landamman or Banneret,[2]
The petty chieftain of a shepherd race?
How! Were it not a far more glorious choice
To bend in homage to our royal lord,
And swell the princely splendours of his court,
Than sit at home, the peer of your own vassals,
And share the judgment-seat with vulgar clowns?
Atting. Ah, Uly, Uly; all too well I see
The tempter's voice has caught thy willing ear,
And poured its subtle poison in thy heart.
Rud. Yes, I conceal it not. It doth offend
My inmost soul to hear the strangers' gibes,

[1] The bench reserved for the nobility.

[2] The Landamman was an officer chosen by the Swiss Gemeinde, or Diet, to preside over them. The Banneret was an officer intrusted with the keeping of the State Banner, and such others as were taken in battle.

That taunt us with the name of "Peasant Nobles!"
Think you the heart that's stirring here can brook,
While all the young nobility around
Are reaping honour under Hapsburg's banner,
That I should loiter, in inglorious ease,
Here on the heritage my fathers left,
And, in the dull routine of vulgar toil,
Lose all life's glorious spring? In other lands
Great deeds are done. A world of fair renown
Beyond these mountains stirs in martial pomp.
My helm and shield are rusting in the hall;
The martial trumpet's spirit-stirring blast,
The herald's call, inviting to the lists,
Rouse not the echoes of these vales, where naught
Save cowherd's horn and cattle bell is heard,
In one unvarying dull monotony.

Atting. Deluded boy, seduced by empty show!
Despise the land that gave thee birth! Ashamed
Of the good ancient customs of thy sires!
The day will come when thou, with burning tears,
Wilt long for home, and for thy native hills,
And that dear melody of tuneful herds,
Which now, in proud disgust, thou dost despise!
A day when wistful pangs shall shake thy heart,
Hearing their music in a foreign land.
Oh! potent is the spell that binds to home!
No, no, the cold, false world is not for thee.
At the proud court, with thy true heart, thou wilt
Forever feel a stranger among strangers.
The world asks virtues of far other stamp
Than thou hast learned within these simple vales.
But go—go thither—barter thy free soul,
Take land in fief, be minion to a prince,
Where thou might'st be lord paramount, and prince
Of all thine own unburdened heritage!
O Uly, Uly, stay among thy people!
Go not to Altdorf. Oh, abandon not
The sacred cause of thy wronged native land!
I am the last of all my race. My name

Ends with me. Yonder hang my helm and shield;
They will be buried with me in the grave.[1]
And must I think, when yielding up my breath,
That thou but wait'st the closing of mine eyes,
To stoop thy knee to this new feudal court,
And take in vassalage from Austria's hands
The noble lands, which I from God received,
Free and unfettered as the mountain air!

Rud. 'Tis vain for us to strive against the King.
The world pertains to him:—shall we alone,
In mad, presumptuous obstinacy, strive
To break that mighty chain of lands which he
Hath drawn around us with his giant grasp?
His are the markets, his the courts—his, too,
The highways; nay, the very carrier's horse,
That traffics on the Gotthardt, pays him toll.
By his dominions, as within a net,
We are inclosed and girded round about.
—And will the empire shield us? Say, can it
Protect itself 'gainst Austria's growing power?
To God and not to emperors must we look!
What store can on their promises be placed
When they, to meet their own necessities,
Can pawn and even alienate the towns
That flee for shelter 'neath the eagle's wings?[2]
No, uncle! It is wise and wholesome prudence,
In times like these, when faction's all abroad,
To vow attachment to some mighty chief.
The imperial crown's transferred from line to line.[3]
It has no memory for faithful service:
But to secure the favour of these great
Hereditary masters were to sow
Seed for a future harvest.

[1] According to the custom, by which, when the last male descendant of a noble family died, his sword, helmet, and shield were buried with him.

[2] This frequently occurred. But in the event of an imperial city being mortgaged for the purpose of raising money, it lost its freedom, and was considered as put out of the realm.

[3] An allusion to the circumstance of the Imperial Crown not being hereditary, but conferred by election on one of the Counts of the Empire.

Atting. Art so wise?
Wilt thou see clearer than thy noble sires,
Who battled for fair freedom's priceless gem
With life, and fortune, and heroic arm?
Sail down the lake to Lucerne, there inquire
How Austria's thraldom weighs the Cantons down.
Soon she will come to count our sheep, our cattle,
To portion out the Alps, e'en to their peaks,
And in our own free woods to hinder us
From striking down the eagle or the stag;
To set her tolls on every bridge and gate,
Impoverish us, to swell her lust of sway,
And drain our dearest blood to feed her wars.
No, if our blood must flow, let it be shed
In our own cause! We purchase liberty
More cheaply far than bondage.
Rud. What can we,
A shepherd race, against great Albert's hosts?
Atting. Learn, foolish boy, to know this shepherd race!
I know them, I have led them on in fight—
I saw them in the battle at Favenz.
What! Austria try, forsooth, to force on us
A yoke we are determined not to bear!
Oh, learn to feel from what a stock thou'rt sprung;
Cast not, for tinsel trash and idle show,
The precious jewel of thy worth away.
To be the chieftain of a freeborn race,
Bound to thee only by their unbought love,
Ready to stand—to fight—to die with thee,
Be that thy pride, be that thy noblest boast!
Knit to thy heart the ties of kindred—home—
Cling to the land, the dear land of thy sires,
Grapple to that with thy whole heart and soul!
Thy power is rooted deep and strongly here,
But in yon stranger world thou'lt stand alone,
A trembling reed beat down by every blast.
Oh, come! 'tis long since we have seen thee, Uly!
Tarry but this one day. Only to-day!
Go not to Altdorf. Wilt thou? Not to-day!

For this one day, bestow thee on thy friends.

[*Takes his hand.*

Rud. I gave my word. Unhand me! I am bound.

Atting. [*Drops his hand and says sternly.*] Bound, didst thou say? Oh, yes, unhappy boy,
Thou art indeed. But not by word or oath.
'Tis by the silken mesh of love thou'rt bound.

[RUDENZ *turns away.*

Ay, hide thee, as thou wilt. 'Tis she, I know,
Bertha of Bruneck, draws thee to the court;
'Tis she that chains thee to the Emperor's service.
Thou think'st to win the noble knightly maid
By thy apostasy. Be not deceived.
She is held out before thee as a lure;
But never meant for innocence like thine.

Rud. No more, I've heard enough. So fare you well. [*Exit.*

Atting. Stay, Uly! stay!—Rash boy, he's gone! I can
Nor hold him back, nor save him from destruction.
And so the Wolfshot has deserted us—
Others will follow his example soon.
This foreign witchery, sweeping o'er our hills,
Tears with its potent spell our youth away.
Oh, luckless hour, when men and manners strange
Into these calm and happy valleys came,
To warp our primitive and guileless ways!
The new is pressing on with might. The old,
The good, the simple, all fleet fast away.
New times come on. A race is springing up,
That think not as their fathers thought before!
What do I hear? All, all are in the grave
With whom erewhile I moved, and held converse;
My age has long been laid beneath the sod:
Happy the man who may not live to see
What shall be done by those that follow me!

SCENE II.—A MEADOW SURROUNDED BY HIGH ROCKS AND WOODED GROUND. ON THE ROCKS ARE TRACKS, WITH RAILS AND LADDERS, BY WHICH THE PEASANTS ARE AFTERWARD SEEN DESCENDING. IN THE BACKGROUND THE LAKE IS OBSERVED, AND OVER IT A MOON RAINBOW IN THE EARLY PART OF THE SCENE. THE PROSPECT IS CLOSED BY LOFTY MOUNTAINS, WITH GLACIERS RISING BEHIND THEM. THE STAGE IS DARK, BUT THE LAKE AND GLACIERS GLISTEN IN THE MOONLIGHT

Melchthal, Baumgarten, Winkelried, Meyer von Sarnen, Burkhart am Buhel, Arnold von Sewa, Klaus von der Flue, *and four other peasants, all armed.*

Melch. [*Behind the scenes.*] The mountain pass is open.
Follow me!
I see the rock, and little cross upon it:
This is the spot; here is the Rootli.

[*They enter with torches.*

Wink. Hark!
Sewa. The coast is clear.
Meyer. None of our comrades come?
We are the first, we Unterwaldeners.
Melch. How far is't i' the night?
Baum. The beacon watch
Upon the Selisberg has just called two.

[*A bell is heard at a distance.*

Meyer. Hush! Hark!
Buhel. The forest chapel's matin bell
Chimes clearly o'er the lake from Switzerland.
Von F. The air is clear, and bears the sound so far.
Melch. Go, you and you, and light some broken boughs;
Let's bid them welcome with a cheerful blaze.

[*Two peasants exeunt.*

Sewa. The moon shines fair to-night. Beneath its beams
The lake reposes, bright as burnished steel.
Buhel. They'll have an easy passage.
Wink. [*Pointing to the lake.*] Ha! look there!
Do you see nothing?
Meyer. Ay, indeed, I do!
A rainbow in the middle of the night.

Melch. Formed by the bright reflection of the moon!
Von F. A sign most strange and wonderful, indeed!
Many there be who ne'er have seen the like.
Sewa. 'Tis doubled, see—a paler one above!
Baum. A boat is gliding yonder right beneath it.
Melch. That must be Werner Stauffacher! I knew
The worthy patriot would not tarry long.
[*Goes with* BAUMGARTEN *toward the shore.*
Meyer. The Uri men are like to be the last.
Buhel. They're forced to take a winding circuit through
The mountains; for the Viceroy's spies are out.
[*In the meanwhile the two peasants have kindled a fire in the centre of the stage.*
Melch. [*On the shore.*] Who's there? The word?
Stauff. [*From below.*] Friends of the country.
[*All retire up the stage, toward the party landing from the boat. Enter* STAUFFACHER, ITEL REDING, HANS AUF DER MAUER, JORG IM HOFE, CONRAD HUNN, ULRICH DER SCHMIDT, JOST VON WEILER, *and three other peasants, armed.*
All. Welcome!
[*While the rest remain behind exchanging greetings,* MELCHTHAL *comes forward with* STAUFFACHER.
Melch. Oh worthy Stauffacher, I've looked but now
On him who could not look on me again;
I've laid my hands upon his rayless eyes,
And on their vacant orbits sworn a vow
Of vengeance, only to be cooled in blood.
Stauff. Speak not of vengeance. We are here, to meet
The threatened evil, not to avenge the past.
Now tell me what you've done, and what secured,
To aid the common cause in Unterwald.
How stand the peasantry disposed, and how
Yourself escaped the wiles of treachery?
Melch. Through the Surenen's fearful mountain chain,
Where dreary ice-fields stretch on every side,
And sound is none, save the hoarse vulture's cry,
I reached the Alpine pasture, where the herds
From Uri and from Engelberg resort,

And turn their cattle forth to graze in common.
Still, as I went along, I slaked my thirst
With the coarse oozings of the glacier heights
That through the crevices come foaming down,
And turned to rest me in the herdsmen's cots,[1]
Where I was host and guest, until I gained
The cheerful homes and social haunts of men.
Already through these distant vales had spread
The rumour of this last atrocity;
And wheresoe'er I went, at every door,
Kind words saluted me and gentle looks.
I found these simple spirits all in arms
Against our rulers' tyrannous encroachments.
For as their Alps through each succeeding year
Yield the same roots—their streams flow ever on
In the same channels—nay, the clouds and winds
The selfsame course unalterably pursue,
So have old customs there, from sire to son,
Been handed down, unchanging and unchanged;
Nor will they brook to swerve or turn aside
From the fixed even tenor of their life.
With grasp of their hard hands they welcomed me—
Took from the walls their rusty falchions down—
And from their eyes the soul of valour flashed
With joyful lustre, as I spoke those names,
Sacred to every peasant in the mountains,
Your own and Walter Fürst's. Whate'er your voice
Should dictate as the right, they swore to do;
And you they swore to follow e'en to death.
—So sped I on from house to house, secure
In the guest's sacred privilege—and when
I reached at last the valley of my home,
Where dwell my kinsmen, scattered far and near—
And when I found my father, stripped and blind,
Upon the stranger's straw, fed by the alms

[1] These are the cots, or shealings, erected by the herdsmen for shelter, while pasturing their herds on the mountains during the summer. These are left deserted in winter, during which period Melchthal's journey was taken.

Of charity——

Stauff. Great Heaven!

Melch. Yet wept I not!
No—not in weak and unavailing tears
Spent I the force of my fierce burning anguish;
Deep in my bosom, like some precious treasure,
I locked it fast, and thought on deeds alone.
Through every winding of the hills I crept—
No valley so remote but I explored it;
Nay, at the very glacier's ice-clad base,
I sought and found the homes of living men;
And still, where'er my wandering footsteps turned,
The selfsame hatred of these tyrants met me.
For even there, at vegetation's verge,
Where the numbed earth is barren of all fruits,
Their grasping hands had been for plunder thrust.
Into the hearts of all this honest race,
The story of my wrongs struck deep, and now
They, to a man, are ours; both heart and hand.

Stauff. Great things, indeed, you've wrought in little time.

Melch. I did still more than this. The fortresses,
Rossberg and Sarnen, are the country's dread;
For from behind their adamantine walls
The foe, like eagle from his eyrie swoops.
And, safe himself, spreads havoc o'er the land.
With my own eyes I wished to weigh its strength,
So went to Sarnen, and explored the castle.

Stauff. How! Venture even into the tiger's den?

Melch. Disguised in pilgrim's weeds I entered it;
I saw the Viceroy feasting at his board—
Judge if I'm master of myself or no!
I saw the tyrant, and I slew him not!

Stauff. Fortune, indeed, upon your boldness smiled.

[*Meanwhile the others have arrived and join* Melchthal *and* Stauffacher.

Yet tell me now, I pray, who are the friends,
The worthy men, who came along with you?
Make me acquainted with them, that we may
Speak frankly, man to man, and heart to heart.

Meyer. In the three Cantons, who, sir, knows not you?
Meyer of Sarnen is my name; and this
Is Struth of Winkelried, my sister's son.
Stauff. No unknown name. A Winkelried it was
Who slew the dragon in the fen at Weiler,
And lost his life in the encounter, too.
Wink. That, Master Stauffacher, was my grandfather.
Melch. [*Pointing to two peasants.*] These two are men who till the cloister lands
Of Engelberg, and live behind the forest.
You'll not think ill of them, because they're serfs,
And sit not free upon the soil, like us.
They love the land, and bear a good repute.
Stauff. [*To them.*] Give me your hands. He has good cause for thanks,
That to no man his body's service owes.
But worth is worth, no matter where 'tis found.
Hunn. That is Herr Reding, sir, our old Landamman.
Meyer. I know him well. I am at law with him
About a piece of ancient heritage.—
Herr Reding, we are enemies in court,
Here we are one. [*Shakes his hand.*
Stauff. That's well and bravely said.
Wink. Listen! They come. The horn of Uri! Hark!
[*On the right and left armed men are seen descending the rocks with torches.*
Mauer. Look, is not that the holy man of God?
A worthy priest! The terrors of the night
And the way's pains and perils scare not him,
A faithful shepherd caring for his flock.
Baum. The Sacrist follows him, and Walter Fürst.
But where is Tell? I do not see him there.
[WALTER FÜRST, RÖSSELMANN *the Pastor*, PETERMANN *the Sacrist*, KUONI *the Shepherd*, WERNI *the Huntsman*, RUODI *the Fisherman, and five other countrymen, thirty-three in all, advance and take their places round the fire.*
Fürst. Thus must we, on the soil our fathers left us,
Creep forth by stealth to meet like murderers,

And in the night, that should her mantle lend
Only to crime and black conspiracy,
Assert our own good rights, which yet are clear
As is the radiance of the noonday sun.

Melch. So be it. What is hatched in gloom of night
Shall free and boldly meet the morning light.

Rössel. Confederates! Listen to the words which God
Inspires my heart withal. Here we are met,
To represent the general weal. In us
Are all the people of the land convened.
Then let us hold the Diet, as of old,
And as we're wont in peaceful times to do.
The time's necessity be our excuse,
If there be aught informal in this meeting.
Still, wheresoe'er men strike for justice, there
Is God, and now beneath his heaven we stand.

Stauff. 'Tis well advised.—Let us, then, hold the Diet,
According to our ancient usages.—
Though it be night, there's sunshine in our cause.

Melch. Few though our numbers be, the hearts are here
Of the whole people; here the best are met.

Hunn. The ancient books may not be near at hand,
Yet they are graven in our inmost hearts.

Rössel. 'Tis well. And now, then, let a ring be formed,
And plant the swords of power within the ground.[1]

Mauer. Let the Landamman step into his place,
And by his side his secretaries stand.

Sacrist. There are three Cantons here. Which hath the right
To give the head to the united Council?
Schwytz may contest that dignity with Uri,
We Unterwald'ners enter not the field.

Melch. We stand aside. We are but suppliants here,
Invoking aid from our more potent friends.

Stauff. Let Uri have the sword. Her banner takes,
In battle, the precedence of our own.

Fürst. Schwytz, then, must share the honour of the sword;
For she's the honoured ancestor of all.

[1] It was the custom at the meetings of the Landes Gemeinde, or Diet, to set swords upright in the ground as emblems of authority.

Rössel. Let me arrange this generous controversy.
Uri shall lead in battle—Schwytz in Council.

Fürst. [*Gives* STAUFFACHER *his hand.*] Then take your place.

Stauff. Not I. Some older man.

Hofe. Ulrich, the smith, is the most aged here.

Mauer. A worthy man, but not a freeman; no!
—No bondman can be judge in Switzerland.

Stauff. Is not Herr Reding here, our old Landamman?
Where can we find a worthier man than he?

Fürst. Let him be Amman and the Diet's chief!
You that agree with me, hold up your hands!

[*All hold up their right hands.*

Reding. [*Stepping into the centre.*] I can not lay my hands upon the books;
But by yon everlasting stars I swear,
Never to swerve from justice and the right.

[*The two swords are placed before him, and a circle formed; Schwytz in the centre, Uri on his right, Unterwald on his left.*

Reding. [*Resting on his battle sword.*] Why, at the hour when spirits walk the earth,
Meet the three Cantons of the mountains here,
Upon the lake's inhospitable shore?
What may the purport be of this new league
We here contract beneath the starry heaven?

Stauff. [*Entering the circle.*] 'Tis no new league that here we now contract,
But one our fathers framed, in ancient times,
We purpose to renew! For know, confederates,
Though mountain ridge and lake divide our bounds,
And each Canton by its own laws is ruled,
Yet are we but one race, born of one blood,
And all are children of one common home.

Wink. Is then the burden of our legends true,
That we came hither from a distant land?
Oh, tell us what you know, that our new league
May reap fresh vigour from the leagues of old.

Stauff. Hear, then, what aged herdsmen tell. There dwelt
A mighty people in the land that lies

Back to the north. The scourge of famine came;
And in this strait 'twas publicly resolved
That each tenth man, on whom the lot might fall,
Should leave the country. They obeyed—and forth,
With loud lamentings, men and women went,
A mighty host; and to the south moved on,
Cutting their way through Germany by the sword,
Until they gained these pine-clad hills of ours;
Nor stopped they ever on their forward course,
Till at the shaggy dell they halted, where
The Müta flows through its luxuriant meads.
No trace of human creature met their eye,
Save one poor hut upon the desert shore,
Where dwelt a lonely man, and kept the ferry.
A tempest raged—the lake rose mountains high
And barred their further progress. Thereupon
They viewed the country—found it rich in wood,
Discovered goodly springs, and felt as they
Were in their own dear native land once more.
Then they resolved to settle on the spot;
Erected there the ancient town of Schwytz;
And many a day of toil had they to clear
The tangled brake and forest's spreading roots.
Meanwhile their numbers grew, the soil became
Unequal to sustain them, and they crossed
To the black mountain, far as Weissland, where,
Concealed behind eternal walls of ice,
Another people speak another tongue.
They built the village Stanz, beside the Kernwald;
The village Altdorf, in the vale of Reuss;
Yet, ever mindful of their parent stem,
The men of Schwytz, from all the stranger race,
That since that time have settled in the land,
Each other recognise. Their hearts still know,
And beat fraternally to kindred blood.

[*Extends his hand right and left.*

Mauer. Ay, we are all one heart, one blood, one race!

All. [*Joining hands.*] We are one people, and will act as one.

Stauff. The nations round us bear a foreign yoke,

For they have to the conqueror succumbed.
Nay, e'en within our frontiers may be found
Some that owe villein service to a lord,
A race of bonded serfs from sire to son.
But we, the genuine race of ancient Swiss,
Have kept our freedom from the first till now.
Never to princes have we bowed the knee;
Freely we sought protection of the Empire.

Rössel. Freely we sought it—freely it was given.
'Tis so set down in Emperor Frederick's charter.

Stauff. For the most free have still some feudal lord.
There must be still a chief, a judge supreme,
To whom appeal may lie, in case of strife.
And therefore was it that our sires allowed,
For what they had recovered from the waste,
This honour of the Emperor, the lord
Of all the German and Italian soil;
And, like the other free men of his realm,
Engaged to aid him with their swords in war;
The free man's duty this alone should be,
To guard the Empire that keeps guard for him.

Melch. He's but a slave that would acknowledge more.

Stauff. They followed, when the Heribann[1] went forth,
The imperial standard, and they fought its battles!
To Italy they marched in arms, to place
The Cæsars' crown upon the Emperor's head.
But still at home they ruled themselves in peace,
By their own laws and ancient usages.
The Emperor's only right was to adjudge
The penalty of death; he therefore named
Some mighty noble as his delegate,
That had no stake or interest in the land,
Who was called in, when doom was to be passed,
And, in the face of day, pronounced decree,
Clear and distinctly, fearing no man's hate.
What traces here, that we are bondsmen? Speak,
If there be any can gainsay my words!

[1] The Heribann was a muster of warriors similar to the *arrière ban* of France.

Hofe. No! You have spoken but the simple truth;
We never stooped beneath a tyrant's yoke.

Stauff. Even to the Emperor we did not submit,
When he gave judgment 'gainst us for the Church;
For when the Abbey of Einsiedlen claimed
The Alp our fathers and ourselves had grazed,
And showed an ancient charter, which bestowed
The land on them as being ownerless—
For our existence there had been concealed—
What was our answer? This: "The grant is void.
No Emperor can bestow what is our own:
And if the Empire shall deny our rights,
We can, within our mountains, right ourselves!"
Thus spake our fathers! And shall we endure
The shame and infamy of this new yoke,
And from the vassal brook what never king
Dared, in his plenitude of power, attempt?
This soil we have created for ourselves,
By the hard labour of our hands; we've changed
The giant forest, that was erst the haunt
Of savage bears, into a home for man;
Extirpated the dragon's brood, that wont
To rise, distent with venom, from the swamps;
Rent the thick misty canopy that hung
Its blighting vapours on the dreary waste;
Blasted the solid rock; across the chasm
Thrown the firm bridge for the wayfaring man.
By the possession of a thousand years
The soil is ours. And shall an alien lord,
Himself a vassal, dare to venture here,
Insult us by our own hearth fires—attempt
To forge the chains of bondage for our hands,
And do us shame on our own proper soil?
Is there no help against such wrong as this?

[*Great sensation among the people.*

Yes! there's a limit to the despot's power!
When the oppressed for justice looks in vain,
When his sore burden may no more be borne,
With fearless heart he makes appeal to Heaven,

And thence brings down his everlasting rights,
Which there abide, inalienably his,
And indestructible as are the stars.
Nature's primeval state returns again,
Where man stands hostile to his fellow-man;
And if all other means shall fail his need,
One last resource remains—his own good sword.
Our dearest treasures call to us for aid,
Against the oppressor's violence; we stand
For country, home, for wives, for children here!

All. [*Clasping their swords.*] Here stand we for our homes, our wives, and children.

Rössel. [*Stepping into the circle.*] Bethink ye well, before ye draw the sword.

Some peaceful compromise may yet be made;
Speak but one word, and at your feet you'll see
The men who now oppress you. Take the terms
That have been often tendered you; renounce
The Empire, and to Austria swear allegiance!

Mauer. What says the priest? To Austria allegiance?

Buhel. Hearken not to him!

Wink. 'Tis a traitor's counsel,
His country's foe!

Reding. Peace, peace, confederates!

Sewa. Homage to Austria, after wrongs like these!

Von F. Shall Austria extort from us by force
What we denied to kindness and entreaty?

Meyer. Then should we all be slaves, deservedly.

Mauer. Yes! Let him forfeit all a Switzer's rights,
Who talks of yielding thus to Austria's yoke!
I stand on this, Landamman. Let this be
The foremost of our laws!

Melch. Even so! Whoe'er
Shall talk of bearing Austria's yoke, let him
Of all his rights and honours be despoiled,
No man thenceforth receive him at his hearth!

All. [*Raising their right hands.*] Agreed! Be this the law!

Reding. [*After a pause.*] The law it is.

Rössel. Now you are free—this law hath made you free.

Never shall Austria obtain by force
What she has failed to gain by friendly suit.

Weil. On with the order of the day! Proceed!

Reding. Confederates! Have all gentler means been tried?
Perchance the Emperor knows not of our wrongs,
It may not be his will we suffer thus;
Were it not well to make one last attempt,
And lay our grievances before the throne,
Ere we unsheath the sword? Force is at best
A fearful thing e'en in a righteous cause;
God only helps, when man can help no more.

Stauff. [*To* CONRAD HUNN.] Here you can give us information. Speak!

Hunn. I was at Rheinfeld, at the Emperor's court,
Deputed by the Cantons to complain
Of the oppressions of these governors,
And of our liberties the charter claim,
Which each new King till now has ratified.
I found the envoys there of many a town,
From Swabia and the Valley of the Rhine,
Who all received their parchments as they wished,
And straight went home again with merry heart.
But me, your envoy, they to the council sent,
Where I with empty cheer was soon dismissed:
"The Emperor at present was engaged;
Some other time he would attend to us!"
I turned away, and passing through the hall,
With heavy heart, in a recess I saw
The Grand Duke John[1] in tears, and by his side
The noble lords of Wart and Tegerfeld,
Who beckoned me, and said: "Redress yourselves.
Expect not justice from the Emperor.
Does he not plunder his own brother's child,
And keep from him his just inheritance?"
The Duke claims his maternal property,
Urging he's now of age, and 'tis full time
That he should rule his people and estates;

[1] The Duke of Swabia, who soon afterward assassinated his uncle, for withholding his patrimony from him.

What is the answer made to him? The King
Places a chaplet on his head. "Behold
The fitting ornament," he cries, "of youth!"
Mauer. You hear. Expect not from the Emperor
Or right or justice! Then redress yourselves!
Reding. No other course is left us. Now, advise
What plan most likely to insure success.
Fürst. To shake a thraldom off that we abhor,
To keep our ancient rights inviolate,
As we received them from our fathers—this,
Not lawless innovation, is our aim.
Let Cæsar still retain what is his due;
And he that is a vassal, let him pay
The service he is sworn to faithfully.
Meyer. I hold my land of Austria in fief.
Fürst. Continue, then, to pay your feudal dues.
Weil. I'm tenant of the lords of Rappersweil.
Fürst. Continue, then, to pay them rent and tithe.
Rössel. Of Zurich's abbess humble vassal I.
Fürst. Give to the cloister what the cloister claims.
Stauff. The Empire only is my feudal lord.
Fürst. What needs must be, we'll do, but nothing more.
We'll drive these tyrants and their minions hence,
And raze their towering strongholds to the ground,
Yet shed, if possible, no drop of blood.
Let the Emperor see that we were driven to cast
The sacred duties of respect away;
And when he finds we keep within our bounds,
His wrath, belike, may yield to policy;
For truly is that nation to be feared
That, arms in hand, is temperate in its wrath.
Reding. But prithee tell us how may this be done?
The enemy is armed as well as we,
And, rest assured, he will not yield in peace.
Stauff. He will, whene'er he sees us up in arms;
We shall surprise him, ere he is prepared.
Meyer. Easily said, but not so easily done.
Two strongholds dominate the country—they
Protect the foe, and should the King invade us,

Our task would then be dangerous indeed.
Rossberg and Sarnen both must be secured,
Before a sword is drawn in either Canton.
Stauff. Should we delay, the foe would soon be warned;
We are too numerous for secrecy.
Meyer. There is no traitor in the Forest States.
Rössel. But even zeal may heedlessly betray.
Fürst. Delay it longer, and the keep at Altdorf
Will be complete—the governor secure.
Meyer. You think but of yourselves.
Sacristan. You are unjust!
Meyer. Unjust! said you? Dares Uri taunt us so?
Reding. Peace, on your oath!
Sacristan. If Schwytz be leagued with Uri,
Why, then, indeed, we must perforce be dumb.
Reding. And let me tell you, in the Diet's name,
Your hasty spirit much disturbs the peace.
Stand we not all for the same common cause?
Wink. What, if till Christmas we delay? 'Tis then
The custom for the serfs to throng the castle,
Bringing the governor their annual gifts.
Thus may some ten or twelve selected men
Assemble unobserved, within its walls,
Bearing about their persons pikes of steel,
Which may be quickly mounted upon staves,
For arms are not admitted to the fort.
The rest can fill the neighbouring wood, prepared
To sally forth upon a trumpet's blast,
Soon as their comrades have secured the gate;
And thus the castle will with ease be ours.
Melch. The Rossberg I will undertake to scale.
I have a sweetheart in the garrison,
Whom with some tender words I could persuade
To lower me at night a hempen ladder.
Once up, my friends will not be long behind.
Reding. Are all resolved in favour of delay?
[*The majority raise their hands.*
Stauff. [*Counting them.*] Twenty to twelve is the majority.
Fürst. If on the appointed day the castles fall,

From mountain on to mountain we shall speed
The fiery signal: in the capital
Of every Canton quickly rouse the Landsturm.[1]
Then, when these tyrants see our martial front,
Believe me, they will never make so bold
As risk the conflict, but will gladly take
Safe conduct forth beyond our boundaries.

Stauff. Not so with Gessler. He will make a stand.
Surrounded with his dread array of horse,
Blood will be shed before he quits the field,
And even expelled he'd still be terrible.
'Tis hard, nay, dangerous, to spare his life.

Baum. Place me where'er a life is to be lost;
I owe my life to Tell, and cheerfully
Will pledge it for my country. I have cleared
My honour, and my heart is now at rest.

Reding. Counsel will come with circumstance. Be patient!
Something must still be to the moment left.
Yet, while by night we hold our Diet here,
The morning, see, has on the mountain tops
Kindled her glowing beacon. Let us part,
Ere the broad sun surprise us.

Fürst. Do not fear.
The night wanes slowly from these vales of ours.

[*All have involuntarily taken off their caps, and contemplate the breaking of day, absorbed in silence.*

Rössel. By this fair light which greeteth us, before
Those other nations, that, beneath us far,
In noisome cities pent, draw painful breath,
Swear we the oath of our confederacy!
A band of brothers true we swear to be,
Never to part in danger or in death!

[*They repeat his words with three fingers raised.*

We swear we will be free, as were our sires,
And sooner die than live in slavery! [*All repeat as before.*
We swear, to put our trust in God Most High,
And not to quail before the might of man!

[*All repeat as before, and embrace each other.*

[1] A sort of national militia.

Stauff. Now every man pursue his several way
Back to his friends, his kindred, and his home.
Let the herd winter up his flock, and gain
In secret friends for this great league of ours!
What for a time must be endured, endure,
And let the reckoning of the tyrants grow,
Till the great day arrive, when they shall pay
The general and particular debt at once.
Let every man control his own just rage,
And nurse his vengeance for the public wrongs:
For he whom selfish interests now engage,
Defrauds the general weal of what to it belongs.

[*As they are going off in profound silence, in three different directions, the orchestra plays a solemn air. The empty scene remains open for some time, showing the rays of the sun rising over the glaciers.*

ACT III

SCENE I.—COURT BEFORE TELL'S HOUSE. TELL WITH AN AXE. HEDWIG ENGAGED IN HER DOMESTIC DUTIES. WALTER AND WILHELM IN THE BACKGROUND, PLAYING WITH A LITTLE CROSSBOW

[WALTER *sings*]

WITH his crossbow, and his quiver,
The huntsman speeds his way,
Over mountain, dale, and river,
At the dawning of the day.
As the eagle, on wild pinion,
Is the king in realms of air,
So the hunter claims dominion
Over crag and forest lair.
Far as ever bow can carry,
Through the trackless airy space,
All he sees he makes his quarry,
Soaring bird and beast of chase.

Wilhelm. [*Runs forward.*] My string has snapped! O father, mend it, do!

Tell. Not I; a true-born archer helps himself. [*Boys retire.*

Hedwig. The boys begin to use the bow betimes.

Tell. 'Tis early practice only makes the master.

Hedw. Ah! Would to Heaven they never learned the art!

Tell. But they shall learn it, wife, in all its points.
Whoe'er would carve an independent way
Through life, must learn to ward or plant a blow.

Hedw. Alas! alas! and they will never rest
Contentedly at home.

Tell. No more can I!
I was not framed by Nature for a shepherd.
My restless spirit ever yearns for change;
I only feel the flush and joy of life
If I can start fresh quarry every day.

Hedw. Heedless the while of all your wife's alarms,
As she sits watching through long hours at home.
For my soul sinks with terror at the tales
The servants tell about the risks you run.
Whene'er we part, my trembling heart forebodes
That you will ne'er come back to me again.
I see you on the frozen mountain steeps,
Missing, perchance, your leap from crag to crag.
I see the chamois, with a wild rebound,
Drag you down with him o'er the precipice.
I see the avalanche close o'er your head—
The treacherous ice give way, and you sink down
Entombed alive within its hideous gulf.
Ah! in a hundred varying forms does death
Pursue the Alpine huntsman on his course.
That way of life can surely ne'er be blessed
Where life and limb are perilled every hour.

Tell. The man that bears a quick and steady eye,
And trusts in God, and his own lusty thews,
Passes, with scarce a scar, through every danger.
The mountain can not awe the mountain child.
[*Having finished his work, he lays aside his tools.*
And now, methinks, the door will hold awhile—

Axe in the house oft saves the carpenter. [*Takes his cap.*

Hedw. Whither away?

Tell. To Altdorf, to your father.

Hedw. You have some dangerous enterprise in view? Confess!

Tell. Why think you so?

Hedw. Some scheme's on foot Against the governors. There was a Diet Held on the Rootli—that I know—and you Are one of the confederacy, I'm sure.

Tell. I was not there. Yet will I not hold back, Whene'er my country calls me to her aid.

Hedw. Wherever danger is, will you be placed. On you, as ever, will the burden fall.

Tell. Each man shall have the post that fits his powers.

Hedw. You took—ay, 'mid the thickest of the storm— The man of Unterwald across the lake. 'Tis marvel you escaped. Had you no thought Of wife and children, then?

Tell. Dear wife, I had; And therefore saved the father for his children.

Hedw. To brave the lake in all its wrath! 'Twas not To put your trust in God! 'Twas tempting Him.

Tell. Little will he that's over-cautious do.

Hedw. Yes, you've a kind and helping hand for all; But be in straits, and who will lend you aid?

Tell. God grant I ne'er may stand in need of it! [*Takes up his crossbow and arrows.*

Hedw. Why take your crossbow with you? leave it here.

Tell. I want my right hand, when I want my bow. [*The boys return.*

Walt. Where, father, are you going?

Tell. To grand-dad, boy— To Altdorf. Will you go?

Walt. Ay, that I will!

Hedw. The Viceroy's there just now. Go not to Altdorf!

Tell. He leaves to-day.

Hedw. Then let him first be gone, Cross not his path— You know he bears us grudge.

Tell. His ill-will can not greatly injure me.
I do what's right, and care for no man's hate.
Hedw. 'Tis those who do what's right whom most he hates.
Tell. Because he can not reach them. Me, I ween,
His knightship will be glad to leave in peace.
Hedw. Ay!—Are you sure of that?
Tell. Not long ago,
As I was hunting through the wild ravines
Of Shechenthal, untrod by mortal foot—
There, as I took my solitary way
Along a shelving ledge of rocks, where 'twas
Impossible to step on either side—
For high above rose, like a giant wall,
The precipice's side, and far below
The Shechen thundered o'er its rifted bed—
[*The boys press toward him, looking upon him with excited curiosity.*
There, face to face, I met the Viceroy. He
Alone with me—and I myself alone—
Mere man to man, and near us the abyss;
And when his lordship had perused my face,
And knew the man he had severely fined
On some most trivial ground, not long before,
And saw me, with my sturdy bow in hand,
Come striding toward him, his cheek grew pale,
His knees refused their office, and I thought
He would have sunk against the mountain side.
Then, touched with pity for him, I advanced
Respectfully, and said, "'Tis I, my lord."
But ne'er a sound could he compel his lips
To frame in answer. Only with his hand
He beckoned me in silence to proceed.
So I passed on, and sent his train to seek him.
Hedw. He trembled, then, before you? Woe the while
You saw his weakness! that he'll ne'er forgive.
Tell. I shun him, therefore, and he'll not seek me.
Hedw. But stay away to-day. Go hunt instead!
Tell. What do you fear?
Hedw. I am uneasy. Stay!

Tell. Why thus distress yourself without a cause?
Hedw. Because there is no cause. Tell, Tell! stay here!
Tell. Dear wife, I gave my promise I would go.
Hedw. Must you?—then go. But leave the boys with me.
Walt. No, mother dear, I go with father, I.
Hedw. How, Walter! will you leave your mother then?
Walt. I'll bring you pretty things from grandpapa.
[*Exit with his father.*

Wilh. Mother, I'll stay with you!
Hedw. [*Embracing him.*] Yes, yes! thou art
My own dear child. Thou'rt all that's left to me.
[*She goes to the gate of the court and looks anxiously after* Tell *and her son for a considerable time.*

SCENE II.—A RETIRED PART OF THE FOREST—BROOKS DASHING IN SPRAY OVER THE ROCKS

Enter Bertha *in a hunting dress. Immediately afterward* Rudenz

Bertha. He follows me. Now, then, to speak my mind!
Rudenz. [*Entering hastily.*] At length, dear lady, we have met alone
In this wild dell; with rocks on every side,
No jealous eye can watch our interview.
Now let my heart throw off this weary silence.
Bertha. But are you sure they will not follow us?
Rud. See, yonder goes the chase! Now, then, or never!
I must avail me of this precious chance—
Must hear my doom decided by thy lips,
Though it should part me from thy side forever.
Oh, do not arm that gentle face of thine
With looks so stern and harsh! Who—who am I,
That dare aspire so high, as unto thee?
Fame hath not stamped me yet; nor may I take
My place amid the courtly throng of knights,
That, crowned with glory's lustre, woo thy smiles.
Nothing have I to offer, but a heart
That overflows with truth and love for thee.
Bertha. [*Sternly and with severity.*] And dare you speak to me of love—of truth?

You, that are faithless to your nearest ties!
You, that are Austria's slave—bartered and sold
To her—an alien, and your country's tyrant!
Rud. How! This reproach from thee! Whom do I seek,
On Austria's side, my own beloved, but thee?
Bertha. Think you to find me in the traitor's ranks?
Now, as I live, I'd rather give my hand
To Gessler's self, all despot though he be,
Than to the Switzer who forgets his birth,
And stoops to be a tyrant's servile tool.
Rud. O Heaven, what words are these?
Bertha. Say! what can lie
Nearer the good man's heart than friends and kindred?
What dearer duty to a noble soul,
Than to protect weak, suffering innocence,
And vindicate the rights of the oppressed?
My very soul bleeds for your countrymen.
I suffer with them, for I needs must love them;
They are so gentle, yet so full of power;
They draw my whole heart to them. Every day
I look upon them with increased esteem.
But you, whom Nature and your knightly vow
Have given them as their natural protector,
Yet who desert them and abet their foes
In forging shackles for your native land,
You—you incense and wound me to the core.
It tries me to the utmost not to hate you.
Rud. Is not my country's welfare all my wish?
What seek I for her, but to purchase peace
'Neath Austria's potent sceptre?
Bertha. Bondage, rather!
You would drive Freedom from the last stronghold
That yet remains for her upon the earth.
The people know their own true interests better:
Their simple natures are not warped by show.
But round your head a tangling net is wound.
Rud. Bertha, you hate me—you despise me!
Bertha. Nay!
And if I did, 'twere better for my peace.

But to see him despised and despicable—
The man whom one might love——
Rud. Oh, Bertha! You
Show me the pinnacle of heavenly bliss,
Then, in a moment, hurl me to despair!
Bertha. No, no! the noble is not all extinct
Within you. It but slumbers—I will rouse it.
It must have cost you many a fiery struggle
To crush the virtues of your race within you.
But, Heaven be praised, 'tis mightier than yourself,
And you are noble in your own despite!
Rud. You trust me, then? Oh, Bertha, with thy love
What might I not become!
Bertha. Be only that
For which your own high nature destined you.
Fill the position you were born to fill—
Stand by your people and your native land—
And battle for your sacred rights!
Rud. Alas!
How can I win you—how can you be mine,
If I take arms against the Emperor?
Will not your potent kinsmen interpose,
To dictate the disposal of your hand?
Bertha. All my estates lie in the Forest Cantons;
And I am free when Switzerland is free.
Rud. Oh! what a prospect, Bertha, hast thou shown me!
Bertha. Hope not to win my hand by Austria's grace;
Fain would they lay their grasp on my estates,
To swell the vast domains which now they hold.
The selfsame lust of conquest, that would rob
You of your liberty, endangers mine.
Oh, friend, I'm marked for sacrifice—to be
The guerdon of some parasite, perchance!
They'll drag me hence to the imperial court,
That hateful haunt of falsehood and intrigue,
And marriage bonds I loathe await me there.
Love, love alone—your love—can rescue me.
Rud. And thou couldst be content, love, to live here;
In my own native land to be my own?

Oh, Bertha, all the yearnings of my soul
For this great world and its tumultuous strife,
What were they, but a yearning after thee?
In glory's path I sought for thee alone,
And all my thirst of fame was only love.
But if in this calm vale thou canst abide
With me, and bid earth's pomps and pride adieu,
Then is the goal of my ambition won;
And the rough tide of the tempestuous world
May dash and rave around these firm-set hills!
No wandering wishes more have I to send
Forth to the busy scene that stirs beyond.
Then may these rocks, that girdle us, extend
Their giant walls impenetrably round,
And this sequestered, happy vale alone
Look up to heaven, and be my paradise!

Bertha. Now art thou all my fancy dreamed of thee.
My trust has not been given to thee in vain.

Rud. Away, ye idle phantoms of my folly;
In mine own home I'll find my happiness.
Here, where the gladsome boy to manhood grew,
Where every brook, and tree, and mountain peak,
Teems with remembrances of happy hours,
In mine own native land thou wilt be mine.
Ah, I have ever loved it well, I feel
How poor without it were all earthly joys.

Bertha. Where should we look for happiness on earth,
If not in this dear land of innocence?
Here, where old truth hath its familiar home,
Where fraud and guile are strangers, envy never
Shall dim the sparkling fountain of our bliss,
And ever bright the hours shall over us glide.
There do I see thee, in true manly worth,
The foremost of the free and of thy peers,
Revered with homage pure and unconstrained,
Wielding a power that kings might envy thee.

Rud. And thee I see, thy sex's crowning gem,
With thy sweet woman's grace and wakeful love,
Building a heaven for me within my home,

And, as the springtime scatters forth her flowers,
Adorning with thy charms my path of life,
And spreading joy and sunshine all around.

Bertha. And this it was, dear friend, that caused my grief,
To see thee blast this life's supremest bliss
With thine own hand. Ah! what had been my fate,
Had I been forced to follow some proud lord,
Some ruthless despot, to his gloomy keep!
Here are no keeps, here are no bastioned walls
To part me from a people I can bless.

Rud. Yet, how to free myself; to loose the coils
Which I have madly twined around my head?

Bertha. Tear them asunder with a man's resolve.
Whate'er ensue, firm by thy people stand!
It is thy post by birth. [*Hunting-horns are heard in the distance.*
But hark! The chase!
Farewell—'tis needful we should part—away!
Fight for thy land; thou fightest for thy love.
One foe fills all our souls with dread; the blow
That makes one free, emancipates us all. [*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE III.—A MEADOW NEAR ALTDORF. TREES IN THE FOREGROUND. AT THE BACK OF THE STAGE A CAP UPON A POLE. THE PROSPECT IS BOUNDED BY THE BANNBERG, WHICH IS SURMOUNTED BY A SNOW-CAPPED MOUNTAIN

FRIESSHARDT *and* LEUTHOLD *on guard*

Friess. We keep our watch in vain. Zounds! not a soul
Will pass and do obeisance to the cap.
But yesterday the place swarmed like a fair;
Now the old green looks like a desert, quite,
Since yonder scarecrow hung upon the pole.

Leuth. Only the vilest rabble show themselves
And wave their tattered caps in mockery at us.
All honest citizens would sooner make
A weary circuit over half the town,
Than bend their backs before our master's cap.

Friess. They were obliged to pass this way at noon,
As they were coming from the Council House.

I counted then upon a famous catch,
For no one thought of bowing to the cap,
But Rösselmann, the priest, was even with me:
Coming just then from some sick man, he takes
His stand before the pole—lifts up the Host—
The Sacrist, too, must tinkle with his bell—
When down they dropped on knee—myself and all—
In reverence to the Host, but not the cap.

Leuth. Hark ye, companion, I've a shrewd suspicion,
Our post's no better than the pillory.
It is a burning shame, a trooper should
Stand sentinel before an empty cap,
And every honest fellow must despise us.
To do obeisance to a cap, too! Faith,
I never heard an order so absurd!

Friess. Why not, an't please you, to an empty cap?
You've ducked, I'm sure, to many an empty sconce.

[HILDEGARD, MECHTHILD, *and* ELSBETH *enter with their children, and station themselves around the pole.*

Leuth. And you are a time-serving sneak, that takes
Delight in bringing honest folks to harm.
For my part, he that likes may pass the cap—
I'll shut my eyes and take no note of him.

Mech. There hangs the Viceroy! Your obeisance, children!

Els. I would to God he'd go, and leave his cap!
The country would be none the worse for it.

Friess. [*Driving them away.*] Out of the way! Confounded pack of gossips!
Who sent for you? Go, send your husbands here,
If they have courage to defy the order.

[TELL *enters with his crossbow, leading his son* WALTER *by the hand. They pass the hat without noticing it, and advance to the front of the stage.*

Walt. [*Pointing to the Bannberg.*] Father, is't true that on the mountain there
The trees, if wounded with a hatchet, bleed?

Tell. Who says so, boy?

Walt. . The master herdsman, father!
He tells us there's a charm upon the trees,

And if a man shall injure them, the hand
That struck the blow will grow from out the grave.

Tell. There is a charm about them—that's the truth.
Dost see those glaciers yonder—those white horns—
That seem to melt away into the sky?

Walt. They are the peaks that thunder so at night,
And send the avalanches down upon us.

Tell. They are; and Altdorf long ago had been
Submerged beneath these avalanches' weight,
Did not the forest there above the town
Stand like a bulwark to arrest their fall.

Walt. [*After musing a little.*] And are there countries with no mountains, father?

Tell. Yes, if we travel downward from our heights,
And keep descending where the rivers go,
We reach a wide and level country, where
Our mountain torrents brawl and foam no more,
And fair large rivers glide serenely on.
All quarters of the heaven may there be scanned
Without impediment. The corn grows there
In broad and lovely fields, and all the land
Is like a garden fair to look upon.

Walt. But, father, tell me, wherefore haste we not
Away to this delightful land, instead
Of toiling here, and struggling as we do?

Tell. The land is fair and bountiful as Heaven;
But they who till it never may enjoy
The fruits of what they sow.

Walt. Live they not free,
As you do, on the land their fathers left them?

Tell. The fields are all the bishop's or the King's.

Walt. But they may freely hunt among the woods?

Tell. The game is all the monarch's—bird and beast.

Walt. But they, at least, may surely fish the streams?

Tell. Stream, lake, and sea, all to the King belong.

Walt. Who is this King, of whom they're so afraid?

Tell. He is the man who fosters and protects them.

Walt. Have they not courage to protect themselves?

Tell. The neighbour there dare not his neighbour trust.

Walt. I should want breathing-room in such a land.
I'd rather dwell beneath the avalanches.

Tell. 'Tis better, child, to have these glacier peaks
Behind one's back, than evil-minded men!

[*They are about to pass on.*

Walt. See, father, see the cap on yonder pole!

Tell. What is the cap to us? Come, let's begone.

[*As he is going,* FRIESSHARDT, *presenting his pike, stops him.*

Friess. Stand, I command you, in the Emperor's name!

Tell. [*Seizing the pike.*] What would ye? Wherefore do ye stop me thus?

Friess. You've broke the mandate, and with us must go.

Leuth. You have not done obeisance to the cap.

Tell. Friend, let me go.

Friess. Away, away to prison!

Walt. Father to prison. Help! [*Calling to the side scene.* This way, you men!
Good people, help! They're dragging him to prison!

[RÖSSELMANN *the Priest, and the* SACRISTAN, *with three other men, enter.*

Sacris. What's here amiss?

Rössel. Why do you seize this man?

Friess. He is an enemy of the King—a traitor.

Tell. [*Seizing him with violence.*] A traitor, I!

Rössel. Friend, thou art wrong. 'Tis Tell,
An honest man, and worthy citizen.

Walt. [*Descries* FÜRST *and runs up to him.*] Grandfather, help; they want to seize my father!

Friess. Away to prison!

Fürst. [*Running in.*] Stay, I offer bail.—
For God's sake, Tell, what is the matter here?

[MELCHTHAL *and* STAUFFACHER *enter.*

Leuth. He has contemned the Viceroy's sovereign power,
Refusing flatly to acknowledge it.

Stauff. Has Tell done this?

Melch. Villain, you know 'tis false!

Leuth. He has not made obeisance to the cap.

Fürst. And shall for this to prison?—Come, my friend,

Take my security, and let him go.

Friess. Keep your security for yourself—you'll need it.
We only do our duty.—Hence with him!

Melch. [*To the country people.*] This is too bad—shall we stand by and see
Him dragged away before our very eyes?

Sacris. We are the strongest. Friends, endure it not,
Our countrymen will back us to a man.

Friess. Who dares resist the governor's commands?

Other Three Peasants. [*Running in.*] We'll help you. What's the matter? Down with them!

[Hildegard, Mechthild, *and* Elsbeth *return.*

Tell. Go, go, good people; I can help myself.
Think you, had I a mind to use my strength,
These pikes of theirs should daunt me?

Melch. [*To* Friesshardt.] Only try—
Try from our midst to force him, if you dare!

Fürst and Stauff. Peace, peace, friends!

Friess. [*Loudly.*] Riot! Insurrection, ho!

[*Hunting-horns without.*

Women. The governor!

Friess. [*Raising his voice.*] Rebellion! Mutiny!

Stauff. Roar till you burst, knave!

Rössel. and Melch. Will you hold your tongue?

Friess. [*Calling still louder.*] Help, help, I say, the servants of the law!

Fürst. The Viceroy here! Then we shall smart for this!

[*Enter* Gessler *on horseback, with a falcon on his wrist;* Rudolph der Harras, Bertha, *and* Rudenz, *and a numerous train of armed attendants, who form a circle of lances round the whole stage.*

Har. Room for the Viceroy!

Gessl. Drive the clowns apart.
Why throng the people thus? Who calls for help?

[*General silence.*

Who was it? I will know. [Friesshardt *steps forward.*
And who art thou?
And why hast thou this man in custody?

[*Gives his falcon to an attendant.*

Friess. Dread sir, I am a soldier of your guard,
And stationed sentinel beside the cap.
This man I apprehended in the act
Of passing it without obeisance due;
So, as you ordered, I arrested him,
Whereon to rescue him the people tried.

Gessl. [*After a pause.*] And do you, Tell, so lightly hold your King,
And me, who act as his viceregent here,
That you refuse obeisance to the cap
I hung aloft to test your loyalty?
I read in this a disaffected spirit.

Tell. Pardon me, good my lord! The action sprang
From inadvertence—not from disrespect.
Were I discreet, I were not William Tell.
Forgive me now—I'll not offend again.

Gessl. [*After a pause.*] I hear, Tell, you're a master with the bow—
From every rival bear the palm away.

Walt. That's very truth, sir! At a hundred yards
He'll shoot an apple for you off the tree.

Gessl. Is that boy thine, Tell?

Tell. Yes, my gracious lord.

Gessl. Hast any more of them?

Tell. Two boys, my lord.

Gessl. And, of the two, which dost thou love the most?

Tell. Sir, both the boys are dear to me alike.

Gessl. Then, Tell, since at a hundred yards thou canst
Bring down the apple from the tree, thou shalt
Approve thy skill before me. Take thy bow—
Thou hast it there at hand—make ready, then,
To shoot an apple from the stripling's head!
But take this counsel—look well to thine aim,
See that thou hit'st the apple at the first,
For, shouldst thou miss, thy head shall pay the forfeit.

[*All give signs of horror.*

Tell. What monstrous thing, my lord, is this you ask?
What! from the head of mine own child!—No, no!
It can not be, kind sir; you meant not that—

God, in His grace, forbid! You could not ask
A father seriously to do that thing!
Gessl. Thou art to shoot an apple from his head!
I do desire—command it so.
Tell. What, I!
Level my crossbow at the darling head
Of mine own child? No—rather let me die!
Gessl. Or thou must shoot, or with thee dies the boy.
Tell. Shall I become the murderer of my child?
You have no children, sir—you do not know
The tender throbbings of a father's heart.
Gessl. How now, Tell, on a sudden so discreet?
I had been told thou wert a visionary—
A wanderer from the paths of common men.
Thou lovest the marvellous. So have I now
Culled out for thee a task of special daring.
Another man might pause and hesitate—
Thou dashest at it, heart and soul, at once.
Bertha. Oh, do not jest, my lord, with these poor souls!
See, how they tremble, and how pale they look,
So little used are they to hear thee jest.
Gessl. Who tells thee that I jest?
[*Grasping a branch above his head.*
Here is the apple.
Room there, I say! And let him take his distance—
Just eighty paces—as the custom is—
Not an inch more or less! It was his boast,
That at a hundred he could hit his man.—
Now, archer, to your task, and look you miss not!
Har. Heavens! this grows serious.—Down, boy, on your knees,
And beg the governor to spare your life.
Fürst. [*Aside to* Melchthal, *who can scarcely restrain his indignation.*] Command yourself—be calm, I beg of you!
Bertha. [*To the governor.*] Let this suffice you, sir! It is inhuman
To trifle with a father's anguish thus.
Although this wretched man had forfeited
Both life and limb for such a slight offence,

Already has he suffered tenfold death.
Send him away uninjured to his home;
He'll know thee well in future; and this hour
He and his children's children will remember.

Gessl. Open a way there—quick! Why this delay?—
Thy life is forfeited; I might despatch thee,
And see, I graciously repose thy fate
Upon the skill of thine own practised hand.—
No cause has he to say his doom is harsh
Who's made the master of his destiny.—
Thou boastest thine unerring aim. 'Tis well!
Now is the fitting time to show thy skill;
The mark is worthy and the prize is great.
To hit the bull's eye in the target—that
Can many another do as well as thou;—
But he, methinks, is master of his craft,
Who can at all times on his skill rely,
Nor lets his heart disturb or eye or hand.

Fürst. My lord, we bow to your authority;
But oh, let justice yield to mercy here!
Take half my property, nay, take it all,
But spare a father this unnatural doom!

Walt. Grandfather, do not kneel to that bad man!
Say, where am I to stand? I do not fear;
My father strikes the bird upon the wing,
And will not miss now when 'twould harm his boy!

Stauff. Does the child's innocence not touch your heart?

Rössel. Bethink you, sir, there is a God in heaven,
To whom you must account for all your deeds.

Gessl. [*Pointing to the boy.*] Bind him to yonder lime tree!

Walt. What! Bind me?
No, I will not be bound! I will be still—
Still as a lamb—nor even draw my breath!
But if you bind me, I can not be still.
Then I shall writhe and struggle with my bonds.

Har. But let your eyes at least be bandaged, boy!

Walt. And why my eyes? No! Do you think I fear
An arrow from my father's hand? Not I!
I'll wait it firmly, nor so much as wink!—

Quick, father, show them what thy bow can do.
He doubts thy skill—he thinks to ruin us.
Shoot then and hit, though but to spite the tyrant!

[*He goes to the lime tree, and an apple is placed on his head.*

Melch. [*To the country people.*] What! Is this outrage to be perpetrated
Before our very eyes? Where is our oath?

Stauff. Resist we can not! Weapons we have none,
And see the wood of lances round us! See!

Melch. Oh! would to Heaven that we had struck at once!
God pardon those who counselled the delay!

Gessl. [*To* Tell.] Now to your task! Men bear not arms for naught.
To carry deadly tools is dangerous,
And on the archer oft his shaft recoils.
This right, these haughty peasant churls assume,
Trenches upon their master's privileges:
None should be armed but those who bear command.—
It pleases you to carry bow and bolt—
Well, be it so. I will prescribe the mark.

Tell. [*Bends the bow, and fixes the arrow.*] A lane there! Room!

Stauff. What, Tell? You would—no, no!
You shake—your hand's unsteady—your knees tremble.

Tell. [*Letting the bow sink down.*] There's something swims before mine eyes!

Women. Great Heaven!

Tell. Release me from this shot! Here is my heart!

[*Tears open his breast.*

Summon your troopers—let them strike me down!

Gessl. 'Tis not thy life I want—I want the shot.
Thy talent's universal! Nothing daunts thee!
The rudder thou canst handle like the bow!
No storms affright thee, when a life's at stake.
Now, saviour, help thyself—thou savest all!

[Tell *stands fearfully agitated by contending emotions, his hands moving convulsively, and his eyes turning alternately to the governor and to heaven. Suddenly he takes a second arrow from his quiver, and sticks it in his belt. The governor notes all he does.*

Walt. [*Beneath the lime tree.*] Shoot, father, shoot! Fear not!
Tell. It must be!
[*Collects himself and levels the bow.*
Rud. [*Who all the while has been standing in a state of violent excitement, and has with difficulty restrained himself, advances.*] My lord, you will not urge this matter further;
You will not. It was surely but a test.
You've gained your object. Rigour pushed too far
Is sure to miss its aim, however good,
As snaps the bow that's all too straitly bent.
Gessl. Peace, till your counsel's asked for!
Rud. I will speak!
Ay, and I dare! I reverence my King;
But acts like these must make his name abhorred.
He sanctions not this cruelty. I dare
Avouch the fact. And you outstep your powers
In handling thus my harmless countrymen.
Gessl. Ha! thou grow'st bold, methinks!
Rud. I have been dumb
To all the oppressions I was doomed to see.
I've closed mine eyes to shut them from my view,
Bade my rebellious, swelling heart be still,
And pent its struggles down within my breast.
But to be silent longer were to be
A traitor to my King and country both.
Bertha. [*Casting herself between him and the governor.*] Oh, Heavens! you but exasperate his rage!
Rud. My people I forsook—renounced my kindred—
Broke all the ties of Nature, that I might
Attach myself to you. I madly thought
That I should best advance the general weal
By adding sinews to the Emperor's power.
The scales have fallen from mine eyes—I see
The fearful precipice on which I stand.
You've led my youthful judgment far astray—
Deceived my honest heart. With best intent,
I had well-nigh achieved my country's ruin.
Gessl. Audacious boy, this language to thy lord?
Rud. The Emperor is my lord, not you! I'm free

As you by birth, and I can cope with you
In every virtue that beseems a knight.
And if you stood not here in that King's name,
Which I respect e'en where 'tis most abused,
I'd throw my gauntlet down, and you should give
An answer to my gage in knightly sort.
Ay, beckon to your troopers! Here I stand;
But not like these [*Pointing to the people.*
—unarmed. I have a sword,
And he that stirs one step——

Stauff. [*Exclaims.*] The apple's down!

[*While the attention of the crowd has been directed to the spot where* Bertha *had cast herself between* Rudenz *and* Gessler, Tell *has shot.*

Rössel. The boy's alive!

Many Voices. The apple has been struck!

[Walter Fürst *staggers and is about to fall.* Bertha *supports him.*

Gessl. [*Astonished.*] How? Has he shot? The madman!

Bertha. Worthy father!
Pray you, compose yourself. The boy's alive.

Walt. [*Runs in with the apple.*] Here is the apple, father!
Well I knew
You would not harm your boy!

[Tell *stands with his body bent forward, as if still following the arrow. His bow drops from his hand. When he sees the boy advancing, he hastens to meet him with open arms, and embracing him, passionately sinks down with him quite exhausted. All crowd round them deeply affected.*

Bertha. Oh, ye kind Heavens!

Fürst. [*To father and son.*] My children, my dear children!

Stauff. God be praised!

Leuth. Almighty powers! That was a shot indeed!
It will be talked of to the end of time.

Har. This feat of Tell, the archer, will be told
Long as these mountains stand upon their base.

[*Hands the apple to* Gessler.

Gessl. By Heaven! the apple's cleft right through the core.
It was a master shot, I must allow.

Rössel. The shot was good. But woe to him who drove
The man to tempt his God by such a feat!

Stauff. Cheer up, Tell—rise! You've nobly freed yourself,
And now may go in quiet to your home.

Rössel. Come, to the mother let us bear her son!

[*They are about to lead him off.*

Gessl. A word, Tell.

Tell. Sir, your pleasure?

Gessl. Thou didst place
A second arrow in thy belt—nay, nay!
I saw it well. Thy purpose with it? Speak!

Tell. [*Confused.*] It is a custom with all archers, sir.

Gessl. No, Tell, I can not let that answer pass.
There was some other motive, well I know.
Frankly and cheerfully confess the truth:—
Whate'er it be, I promise thee thy life.
Wherefore the second arrow?

Tell. Well, my lord,
Since you have promised not to take my life,
I will, without reserve, declare the truth.

[*He draws the arrow from his belt, and fixes his eyes sternly upon the governor.*

If that my hand had struck my darling child,
This second arrow I had aimed at you,
And, be assured, I should not then have missed.

Gessl. Well, Tell, I promised thou shouldst have thy life;
I gave my knightly word, and I will keep it.
Yet, as I know the malice of thy thoughts,
I'll have thee carried hence, and safely penned,
Where neither sun nor moon shall reach thine eyes.
Thus from thy arrows I shall be secure.—
Seize on him, guards, and bind him! [*They bind him.*

Stauff. How, my lord—
How can you treat in such a way a man
On whom God's hand has plainly been revealed?

Gessl. Well, let us see if it will save him twice!
Remove him to my ship; I'll follow straight,

At Küssnacht I will see him safely lodged.

Rössel. You dare not do't. Nor durst the Emperor's self
So violate our dearest chartered rights.

Gessl. Where are they? Has the Emp'ror confirmed them?
He never has. And only by obedience
May you that favour hope to win from him.
You are all rebels 'gainst the Emp'ror's power—
And bear a desperate and rebellious spirit.
I know you all—I see you through and through.
Him do I single from among you now,
But in his guilt you all participate.
If you are wise, be silent and obey!

[*Exit, followed by* Bertha, Rudenz, Harras, *and attendants.* Friesshardt *and* Leuthold *remain.*

Fürst. [*In violent anguish.*] All's over now! He is resolved to bring
Destruction on myself and all my house.

Stauff. [*To* Tell.] Oh, why did you provoke the tyrant's rage?

Tell. Let him be calm who feels the pangs I felt.

Stauff. Alas! alas! Our every hope is gone.
With you we all are fettered and enchained.

Country People. [*Surrounding* Tell.] Our last remaining comfort goes with you!

Leuth. [*Approaching him.*] I'm sorry for you, Tell, but must obey.

Tell. Farewell!

Walter Tell. [*Clinging to him in great agony.*] O father, father, father dear!

Tell. [*Pointing to heaven.*] Thy Father is on high—appeal to Him!

Stauff. Have you no message, Tell, to send your wife?

Tell. [*Clasping the boy passionately to his breast.*] The boy's uninjured; God will succour me!

[*Tears himself suddenly away, and follows the soldiers of the guard.*

ACT IV

SCENE I.—EASTERN SHORE OF THE LAKE OF LUCERNE; RUGGED AND SINGULARLY SHAPED ROCKS CLOSE THE PROSPECT TO THE WEST. THE LAKE IS AGITATED, VIOLENT ROARING AND RUSHING OF WIND, WITH THUNDER AND LIGHTNING AT INTERVALS.

KUNZ OF GERSAU, FISHERMAN *and* BOY

KUNZ. I saw it with these eyes! Believe me, friend,
It happened all precisely as I've said.
Fisher. How! Tell a prisoner, and to Küssnacht borne?
The best man in the land, the bravest arm,
Had we for liberty to strike a blow!
Kunz. The Viceroy takes him up the lake in person:
They were about to go on board as I
Started from Flüelen; but the gathering storm,
That drove me here to land so suddenly,
May well have hindered them from setting out.
Fisher. Our Tell in chains, and in the Viceroy's power!
Oh, trust me, Gessler will entomb him, where
He never more shall see the light of day;
For, Tell once free, the tyrant well might dread
The just revenge of one so deeply wronged.
Kunz. The old Landamman, too—von Attinghaus—
They say, is lying at the point of death.
Fisher. Then the last anchor of our hopes gives way!
He was the only man that dared to raise
His voice in favour of the people's rights.
Kunz. The storm grows worse and worse. So, fare ye well!
I'll go and seek out quarters in the village.
There's not a chance of getting off to-day. [*Exit.*
Fisher. Tell dragged to prison, and the Baron dead!
Now, Tyranny, exalt thy brazen front—
Throw every shame aside! Truth's voice is dumb!
The eye that watched for us, in darkness closed,
The arm that should have struck thee down, in chains!

Boy. 'Tis hailing hard—come, let us to the hut!
This is no weather to be out in, father!

Fisher. Rage on, ye winds! Ye lightnings, flash your fires!
Burst ye, swollen clouds! Ye cataracts of heaven,
Descend, and drown the country! In the germ
Destroy the generations yet unborn!
Ye savage elements, be lords of all!
Return, ye bears; ye ancient wolves, return
To this wide, howling waste! The land is yours.
Who would live here, when liberty is gone?

Boy. Hark! How the wind whistles, and the whirlpool roars!
I never saw a storm so fierce as this!

Fisher. To level at the head of his own child!
Never had father such command before.
And shall not Nature, rising in wild wrath,
Revolt against the deed? I should not marvel,
Though to the lakes these rocks should bow their heads,
Though yonder pinnacles, yon towers of ice,
That, since creation's dawn have known no thaw,
Should, from their lofty summits, melt away—
Though yonder mountains, yon primeval cliffs,
Should topple down, and a new deluge whelm
Beneath its waves all living men's abodes! [*Bells heard.*

Boy. Hark! they are ringing on the mountain, yonder!
They surely see some vessel in distress.
And toll the bell that we may pray for it. [*Ascends a rock.*

Fisher. Woe to the bark that now pursues its course,
Rocked in the cradle of these storm-tossed waves!
Nor helm nor steersman here can aught avail;
The storm is master. Man is like a ball,
Tossed 'twixt the winds and billows. Far or near,
No haven offers him its friendly shelter!
Without one ledge to grasp, the sheer smooth rocks
Look down inhospitably on his despair,
And only tender him their flinty breasts.

Boy. [*Calling from above.*] Father, a ship: from Flüelen bearing down.

Fisher. Heaven pity the poor wretches! When the storm
Is once entangled in this strait of ours,

It rages like some savage beast of prey,
Struggling against its cage's iron bars!
Howling, it seeks an outlet—all in vain;
For the rocks hedge it round on every side,
Walling the narrow gorge as high as heaven.

[*He ascends a cliff.*

Boy. It is the Governor of Uri's ship;
By its red poop I know it, and the flag.

Fisher. Judgments of Heaven! Yes, it is he himself,
It is the governor! Yonder he sails,
And with him bears the burden of his crimes.
The avenger's arm has not been slow to strike!
Now over him he knows a mightier lord.
These waves yield no obedience to his voice.
These rocks bow not their heads before his cap.
Boy, do not pray; stay not the Judge's arm!

Boy. I pray not for the governor, I pray
For Tell, who's with him there on board the ship.

Fisher. Alas! ye blind, unreasoning elements!
Must ye, in punishing one guilty head,
Destroy the vessel and the pilot too?

Boy. See, see, they've cleared the Buggisgrat;[1] but now
The blast, rebounding from the Devil's Minster,[1]
Has driven them back on the Great Axenberg.[1]
I can not see them now.

Fisher. The Hakmesser[1]
Is there, that's foundered many a gallant ship.
If they should fail to double that with skill,
Their bark will go to pieces on the rocks
That hide their jagged peaks below the lake.
The best of pilots, boy, they have on board.
If man could save them, Tell is just the man,
But he is manacled both hand and foot.

[*Enter* TELL, *with his crossbow. He enters precipitately, looks wildly round, and testifies the most violent agitation. When he reaches the centre of the stage, he throws himself upon his knees, stretching out his hands, first toward the earth, and then toward heaven.*

[1] Rocks on the shore of the Lake of Lucerne.

Boy. [*Observing him.*] See, father! A man on's knees; who can it be?

Fisher. He clutches at the earth with both his hands,
And looks as though he were beside himself.

Boy. [*Advancing.*] What do I see? Come, father, come and look!

Fisher. [*Approaches.*] Who is it? God in heaven! What! Tell!
How came you hither? Speak, Tell!

Boy. Were you not
In yonder ship, a prisoner, and in chains?

Fisher. Were they not carrying you to Küssnacht, Tell?

Tell. [*Rising.*] I am released.

Fisherman and Boy. Released, oh, miracle!

Boy. Whence came you here?

Tell. From yonder vessel!

Fisher. What?

Boy. Where is the Viceroy?

Tell. Drifting on the waves.

Fisher. Is it possible? But you! How are you here?
How 'scaped you from your fetters and the storm?

Tell. By God's most gracious providence. Attend.

Fisherman and Boy. Say on, say on!

Tell. You know what passed at Altdorf.

Fisher. I do—say on!

Tell. How I was seized and bound,
And ordered by the governor to Küssnacht.

Fisher. And how at Flüelen he embarked with you.
All this we know. Say, how have you escaped?

Tell. I lay on deck, fast bound with cords, disarmed,
In utter hopelessness. I did not think
Again to see the gladsome light of day,
Nor the dear faces of my wife and boys,
And eyed disconsolate the waste of waters——

Fisher. O wretched man!

Tell. Then we put forth; the Viceroy,
Rudolph der Harras, and their suite. My bow
And quiver lay astern beside the helm;
And just as we had reached the corner, near

The Little Axen,[1] Heaven ordained it so
That from the Gotthardt's gorge, a hurricane
Swept down upon us with such headlong force
That every oarsman's heart within him sank,
And all on board looked for a watery grave.
Then heard I one of the attendant train,
Turning to Gessler, in this wise accost him:
"You see our danger, and your own, my lord,
And that we hover on the verge of death!
The boatmen there are powerless from fear,
Nor are they confident what course to take.
Now, here is Tell, a stout and fearless man,
And knows to steer with more than common skill:
How if we should avail ourselves of him
In this emergency?" The Viceroy then
Addressed me thus: "If thou wilt undertake
To bring us through this tempest safely, Tell,
I might consent to free thee from thy bonds."
I answered: "Yes, my lord; so help me God,
I'll see what can be done!" On this they loosed
The cords that bound me, and I took my place
Beside the helm, and steered as best I could,
Yet ever eyed my shooting gear askance,
And kept a watchful eye upon the shore,
To find some point where I might leap to land:
And when I had descried a shelving crag,
That jutted, smooth atop into the lake——

Fisher. I know it. At the foot of the Great Axen;
So steep it looks, I never could have dreamed
That from a boat a man could leap to it.

Tell. I bade the men to row with all their force
Until we came before the shelving ledge.
For there, I said, the danger will be past!
Stoutly they pulled, and soon we neared the point;
One prayer to God for His assisting grace,
And, straining every muscle, I brought round
The vessel's stern close to the rocky wall;
Then snatching up my weapons, with a bound

[1] A rock on the shore of the Lake of Lucerne.

I swung myself upon the flattened shelf,
And with my feet thrust off, with all my might,
The puny bark into the watery hell.
There let it drift about, as Heaven ordains!
Thus am I here, delivered from the might
Of the dread storm, and man's more dreadful still.

Fisher. Tell, Tell, the Lord has manifestly wrought
A miracle in thy behalf! I scarce
Can credit my own eyes. But tell me, now,
Whither you purpose to betake yourself?
For you will be in peril, should perchance
The Viceroy escape this tempest with his life.

Tell. I heard him say, as I lay bound on board,
At Brunnen he proposed to disembark,
And, crossing Schwytz, convey me to his castle.

Fisher. Means he to go by land?

Tell. So he intends.

Fisher. Oh, then conceal yourself without delay!
Not twice will Heaven release you from his grasp.

Tell. Which is the nearest way to Arth and Küssnacht?

Fisher. The public road leads by the way of Steinen,
But there's a nearer road, and more retired,
That goes by Lowerz, which my boy can show you.

Tell. [*Gives him his hand.*] May Heaven reward your kindness! Fare ye well. [*As he is going, he comes back.*
Did not you also take the oath at Rootli?
I heard your name, methinks.

Fisher. Yes, I was there,
And took the oath of the confederacy.

Tell. Then do me this one favour: speed to Bürglen—
My wife is anxious at my absence—tell her
That I am free, and in secure concealment.

Fisher. But whither shall I tell her you have fled?

Tell. You'll find her father with her, and some more,
Who took the oath with you upon the Rootli;
Bid them be resolute, and strong of heart—
For Tell is free and master of his arm;
They shall hear further news of me ere long.

Fisher. What have you, then, in view? Come, tell me frankly!

Tell. When once 'tis done, 'twill be in every mouth. [*Exit.*

Fisher. Show him the way, boy. Heaven be his support!
Whate'er he has resolved, he'll execute. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—BARONIAL MANSION OF ATTINGHAUSEN. THE BARON UPON A COUCH DYING. WALTER FÜRST, STAUFFACHER, MELCHTHAL, AND BAUMGARTEN ATTENDING ROUND HIM. WALTER TELL KNEELING BEFORE THE DYING MAN

Fürst. All now is over with him. He is gone.

Stauff. He lies not like one dead. The feather, see,
Moves on his lips! His sleep is very calm,
And on his features plays a placid smile.

[BAUMGARTEN *goes to the door and speaks with some one.*

Fürst. Who's there?

Baum. [*Returning.*] Tell's wife, your daughter; she insists
That she must speak with you, and see her boy.

[WALTER TELL *rises.*

Fürst. I who need comfort—can I comfort her?
Does every sorrow centre on my head?

Hedw. [*Forcing her way in.*] Where is my child? Unhand me! I must see him.

Stauff. Be calm! Reflect, you're in the house of death!

Hedw. [*Falling upon her boy's neck.*] My Walter! Oh, he yet is mine!

Walt. Dear mother!

Hedw. And is it surely so? Art thou unhurt?

[*Gazing at him with anxious tenderness.*

And is it possible he aimed at thee?
How could he do it? Oh, he has no heart—
And he could wing an arrow at his child!

Fürst. His soul was racked with anguish when he did it.
No choice was left him, but to shoot or die!

Hedw. Oh, if he had a father's heart, he would
Have sooner perished by a thousand deaths!

Stauff. You should be grateful for God's gracious care,
That ordered things so well.

Hedw. Can I forget
What might have been the issue? God of heaven,

Were I to live for centuries, I still
Should see my boy tied up—his father's mark—
And still the shaft would quiver in my heart!

Melch. You know not how the Viceroy taunted him!

Hedw. Oh, ruthless heart of man! Offend his pride,
And reason in his breast forsakes her seat;
In his blind wrath he'll stake upon a cast
A child's existence and a mother's heart!

Baum. Is then your husband's fate not hard enough,
That you embitter it by such reproaches?
Have you no feeling for his sufferings?

Hedw. [*Turning to him and gazing full upon him.*] Hast thou tears only for thy friend's distress?
Say, where were you when he—my noble Tell—
Was bound in chains? Where was your friendship then?
The shameful wrong was done before your eyes;
Patient you stood, and let your friend be dragged,
Ay, from your very hands. Did ever Tell
Act thus to you? Did he stand whining by,
When on your heels the Viceroy's horsemen pressed,
And full before you roared the storm-tossed lake?
Oh, not with idle tears his pity showed;
Into the boat he sprang, forgot his home,
His wife, his children, and delivered thee!

Fürst. It had been madness to attempt his rescue,
Unarmed, and few in numbers as we were!

Hedw. [*Casting herself upon his bosom.*] O father, and thou too hast lost my Tell!
The country—all have lost him! All lament
His loss; and, oh, how he must pine for us!
Heaven keep his soul from sinking to despair!
No friend's consoling voice can penetrate
His dreary dungeon walls. Should he fall sick!
Ah! In the vapours of the murky vault
He must fall sick. Even as the Alpine rose
Grows pale and withers in the swampy air,
There is no life for him, but in the sun,
And in the breath of heaven's fresh-blowing airs.
Imprisoned! Liberty to him is breath;

He can not live in the rank dungeon air!

Stauff. Pray you be calm! And hand in hand we'll all
Combine to burst his prison doors.

Hedw. He gone,
What have you power to do? While Tell was free,
There still, indeed, was hope—weak innocence
Had still a friend, and the oppressed a stay.
Tell saved you all! You can not all combined
Release him from his cruel prison bonds. [*The* BARON *wakes.*

Baum. Hush, hush! He starts!

Atting. [*Sitting up.*] Where is he?

Stauff. Who?

Atting. He leaves me—
In my last moments he abandons me.

Stauff. He means his nephew. Have they sent for him?

Fürst. He has been summoned.—Cheerly, sir! Take comfort!
He has found his heart at last, and is our own.

Atting. Say, has he spoken for his native land?

Stauff. Ay, like a hero!

Atting. Wherefore comes he not,
That he may take my blessing ere I die?
I feel my life fast ebbing to a close.

Stauff. Nay, talk not thus, dear sir! This last short sleep
Has much refreshed you, and your eye is bright.

Atting. Life is but pain, and that has left me now;
My sufferings, like my hopes, have passed away.
[*Observing the boy.*
What boy is that?

Fürst. Bless him. Oh, good my lord!
He is my grandson, and is fatherless.
[HEDWIG *kneels with the boy before the dying man.*

Atting. And fatherless—I leave you all, ay, all!
Oh, wretched fate, that these old eyes should see
My country's ruin, as they close in death!
Must I attain the utmost verge of life,
To feel my hopes go with me to the grave?

Stauff. [*To* FÜRST.] Shall he depart 'mid grief and gloom like this?

Shall not his parting moments be illumed
By hope's inspiring beams?—My noble lord,
Raise up your drooping spirit! We are not
Forsaken quite—past all deliverance.

Atting. Who shall deliver you?

Fürst. Ourselves. For know,
The Cantons three are to each other pledged
To hunt the tyrants from the land. The league
Has been concluded, and a sacred oath
Confirms our union. Ere another year
Begins its circling course, the blow shall fall.
In a free land your ashes shall repose.

Atting. The league concluded! Is it really so?

Melch. On one day shall the Cantons rise together.
All is prepared to strike—and to this hour
The secret closely kept, though hundreds share it;
The ground is hollow 'neath the tyrants' feet;
Their days of rule are numbered, and ere long
No trace will of their hateful sway be left.

Atting. Ay, but their castles, how to master them?

Melch. On the same day they, too, are doomed to fall.

Atting. And are the nobles parties to this league?

Stauff. We trust to their assistance, should we need it;
As yet the peasantry alone have sworn.

Atting. [*Raising himself up in great astonishment.*] And have the peasantry dared such a deed
On their own charge, without the nobles' aid—
Relied so much on their own proper strength?
Nay then, indeed, they want our help no more;
We may go down to death cheered by the thought
That after us the majesty of man
Will live, and be maintained by other hands.

[*He lays his hand upon the head of the child who is kneeling before him.*

From this boy's head, whereon the apple lay,
Your new and better liberty shall spring;
The old is crumbling down—the times are changing—
And from the ruins blooms a fairer life.

Stauff. [*To* Fürst.] See, see, what splendour streams around his eye!

This is not Nature's last expiring flame,
It is the beam of renovated life.

Atting. From their old towers the nobles are descending,
And swearing in the towns the civic oath.
In Uechtland and Thurgau the work's begun;
The noble Berne lifts her commanding head,
And Freyburg is a stronghold of the free;
The stirring Zurich calls her guilds to arms—
And now, behold!—the ancient might of kings
Is shivered 'gainst her everlasting walls.

[*He speaks what follows with a prophetic tone; his utterance rising into enthusiasm.*

I see the princes and their haughty peers,
Clad all in steel, come striding on to crush
A harmless shepherd race with mailèd hand.
Desp'rate the conflict: 'tis for life or death;
And many a pass will tell to after years
Of glorious victories sealed in foemen's blood.[1]
The peasant throws himself with naked breast,
A willing victim on their serried spears;
They yield—the flower of chivalry's cut down,
And Freedom waves her conquering banner high

[*Grasps the hands of* WALTER FÜRST *and* STAUFFACHER.

Hold fast together, then—forever fast!
Let freedom's haunts be one in heart and mind!
Set watches on your mountain tops, that league
May answer league, when comes the hour to strike.
Be one—be one—be one——

[*He falls back upon the cushion. His lifeless hands continue to grasp those of* FÜRST *and* STAUFFACHER, *who regard him for some moments in silence, and then retire, overcome with sorrow. Meanwhile the servants have quietly pressed into the chamber, testifying different degrees of grief. Some kneel down beside him and weep on his body: while this scene is passing, the castle bell tolls.*

[1] An allusion to the gallant self-devotion of Arnold Struthan of Winkelried, at the battle of Sempach [9th July, 1386], who broke the Austrian phalanx by rushing on their lances, grasping as many of them as he

Rud. [*Entering hurriedly.*] Lives he? Oh, say, can he still hear my voice?

Fürst. [*Averting his face.*] You are our seignior and protector now;

Henceforth this castle bears another name.

Rud. [*Gazing at the body with deep emotion.*] O God! Is my repentance, then, too late?

Could he not live some few brief moments more,
To see the change that has come o'er my heart?
Oh, I was deaf to his true counselling voice,
While yet he walked on earth. Now he is gone—
Gone, and forever—leaving me the debt—
The heavy debt I owe him—undischarged!
Oh, tell me! did he part in anger with me?

Stauff. When dying, he was told what you had done,
And blessed the valour that inspired your words!

Rud. [*Kneeling down beside the dead body.*] Yes, sacred relics of a man beloved!

Thou lifeless corpse! Here, on thy death-cold hand,
Do I abjure all foreign ties forever!
And to my country's cause devote myself.
I am a Switzer, and will act as one,
With my whole heart and soul. [*Rises.*
Mourn for our friend,
Our common parent, yet be not dismayed!
'Tis not alone his lands that I inherit—
His heart—his spirit—have devolved on me;
And my young arm shall execute the task
Which in his hoary age he could not pay.
Give me your hands, ye venerable sires!
Thine, Melchthal, too! Nay, do not hesitate,
Nor from me turn distrustfully away.
Accept my plighted vow—my knightly oath!

Fürst. Give him your hands, my friends! A heart like this,

could reach, and concentrating them upon his breast. The confederates rushed forward through the gap thus opened by the sacrifice of their comrade, broke and cut down their enemy's ranks, and soon became the masters of the field. "Dear and faithful confederates, I will open you a passage. Protect my wife and children," were the words of Winkelried, as he rushed to death.

That sees and owns its error, claims our trust.
Melch. You ever held the peasantry in scorn.
What surety have we, that you mean us fair?
Rud. Oh, think not of the error of my youth!
Stauff. [*To* MELCHTHAL.] Be one! They were our father's latest words.
See they be not forgotten!
Melch. Take my hand—
A peasant's hand—and with it, noble sir,
The gage and the assurance of a man!
Without us, sir, what would the nobles be?
Our order is more ancient, too, than yours!
Rud. I honour it—will shield it with my sword!
Melch. The arm, my lord, that tames the stubborn earth,
And makes its bosom blossom with increase,
Can also shield its owner's breast at need.
Rud. Then you shall shield my breast, and I will yours,
Thus each be strengthened by the other's strength.
Yet wherefore talk we, while our native land
Is still to alien tyranny a prey?
First let us sweep the foemen from the soil,
Then reconcile our difference in peace!
[*After a moment's pause.*
How! You are silent! Not a word for me!
And have I yet no title to your trust?—
Then must I force my way, despite your will,
Into the League you secretly have formed.
You've held a Diet on the Rootli—I
Know this—know all that was transacted there;
And though not trusted with your secret, I
Have kept it closely like a sacred pledge.
Trust me—I never was my country's foe,
Nor would I ever have against you stood!
Yet you did wrong—to put your rising off.
Time presses! We must strike, and swiftly too!
Already Tell is lost through your delay.
Stauff. We swore that we should wait till Christmastide.
Rud. I was not there—I did not take the oath.
If you delay, I will not!

Melch. What! You would——

Rud. I count me now among the country's chiefs,
And my first duty is to guard your rights.

Fürst. Your nearest and your holiest duty is
Within the earth to lay these dear remains.

Rud. When we have set the country free, we'll place
Our fresh victorious wreaths upon his bier.
Oh, my dear friends, 'tis not your cause alone!—
I with the tyrants have a cause to fight,
That more concerns myself. My Bertha's gone,
Has disappeared—been carried off by stealth—
Stolen from among us by their ruffian hands!

Stauff. So fell an outrage has the tyrant dared
Against a lady free and nobly born?

Rud. Alas! my friends, I promised help to you,
And I must first implore it for myself!
She that I love is stolen—is forced away,
And who knows where she's by the tyrant hid,
Or with what outrages his ruffian crew
May force her into nuptials she detests?
Forsake me not!—Oh, help me to her rescue!
She loves you! Well, oh well, has she deserved
That all should rush to arms in her behalf!

Stauff. What course do you propose?

Rud. Alas! I know not.
In the dark mystery that shrouds her fate—
In the dread agony of this suspense—
Where I can grasp at naught of certainty—
One single ray of comfort beams upon me.
From out the ruins of the tyrant's power
Alone can she be rescued from the grave.
Their strongholds must be levelled, every one,
Ere we can penetrate her dungeon walls.

Melch. Come, lead us on! We follow! Why defer
Until to-morrow what to-day may do?
Tell's arm was free when we at Rootli swore.
This foul enormity was yet undone.
And change of circumstance brings change of vow;
Who such a coward as to waver still?

Rud. [*To* WALTER FÜRST.] Meanwhile to arms, and wait
in readiness
The fiery signal on the mountain tops!
For swifter than a boat can scour the lake
Shall you have tidings of our victory;
And when you see the welcome flames ascend,
Then, like the lightning, swoop upon the foe,
And lay the despots and their creatures low!

SCENE III.—THE PASS NEAR KÜSSNACHT, SLOPING DOWN FROM BEHIND, WITH ROCKS ON EITHER SIDE. THE TRAVELLERS ARE VISIBLE UPON THE HEIGHTS, BEFORE THEY APPEAR ON THE STAGE. ROCKS ALL ROUND THE STAGE. UPON ONE OF THE FOREMOST A PROJECTING CLIFF OVERGROWN WITH BRUSHWOOD

Tell. [*Enters with his crossbow.*] Through this ravine he needs
must come. There is
No other way to Küssnacht. Here I'll do it!
The ground is everything I could desire.
Yon elder bush will hide me from his view,
And from that point my shaft is sure to hit.
The straitness of the gorge forbids pursuit.
Now, Gessler, balance thine account with Heaven!
Thou must away from earth—thy sand is run.

Quiet and harmless was the life I led,
My bow was bent on forest game alone;
No thoughts of murder rested on my soul.
But thou hast scared me from my dream of peace;
The milk of human kindness thou hast turned
To rankling poison in my breast; and made
Appalling deeds familiar to my soul.
He who could make his own child's head his mark,
Can speed his arrow to his foeman's heart.

My boys, poor innocents, my loyal wife,
Must be protected, tyrant, from thy rage!
When last I drew my bow—with trembling hand—
And thou, with fiendishly remorseless glee

Forced me to level at my own boy's head,
When I, imploring pity, writhed before thee,
Then in the anguish of my soul I vowed
A fearful oath, which met God's ear alone,
That when my bow next winged an arrow's flight,
Its aim should be thy heart. The vow I made,
Amid the hellish torments of that moment,
I hold a sacred debt, and I will pay it.

Thou art my lord, my Emperor's delegate;
Yet would the Emperor not have stretched his power
So far as thou hast done. He sent thee here
To deal forth law—stern law—for he is wroth;
But not to wanton with unbridled will
In every cruelty, with fiendlike joy:
There lives a God to punish and avenge.

Come forth, thou bringer once of bitter pangs,
My precious jewel now—my chiefest treasure—
A mark I'll set thee, which the cry of grief
Could never penetrate—but thou shalt pierce it—
And thou, my trusty bowstring, that so oft
For sport has served me faithfully and well,
Desert me not in this dread hour of need—
Only be true this once, my own good cord,
That hast so often winged the biting shaft:
For shouldst thou fly successless from my hand,
I have no second to send after thee.

[*Travellers pass over the stage.*

I'll sit me down upon this bench of stone,
Hewn for the wayworn traveller's brief repose—
For here there is no home. Men hurry past
Each other, with quick step and careless look,
Nor stay to question of their grief. Here goes
The merchant, all anxiety—the pilgrim,
With scantly furnished scrip—the pious monk,
The scowling robber, and the jovial player,
The carrier with his heavy-laden horse,
That comes to us from the far haunts of men;

For every road conducts to the world's end.
They all push onward—every man intent
On his own several business—mine is murder! [*Sits down.*

Time was, my dearest children, when with joy
You hailed your father's safe return to home
From his long mountain toils; for, when he came,
He ever brought with him some little gift—
A lovely Alpine flower—a curious bird—
Or elf-bolt, such as on the hills are found.
But now he goes in quest of other game,
Sits in this gorge, with murder in his thoughts,
And for his enemy's life-blood lies in wait.
But still it is of you alone he thinks,
Dear children. 'Tis to guard your innocence,
To shield you from the tyrant's fell revenge,
He bends his bow to do a deed of blood! [*Rises.*

Well—I am watching for a noble prey—
Does not the huntsman, with unflinching heart,
Roam for whole days, when winter frosts are keen,
Leap at the risk of death from rock to rock—
And climb the jagged, slippery steeps, to which
His limbs are glued by his own streaming blood—
And all to hunt a wretched chamois down?
A far more precious prize is now my aim—
The heart of that dire foe who seeks my life!

[*Sprightly music heard in the distance, which comes gradually nearer.*

From my first years of boyhood I have used
The bow—been practised in the archer's feats;
The bull's eye many a time my shafts have hit,
And many a goodly prize have I brought home
From competitions. But this day I'll make
My master-shot, and win what's best to win
In the whole circuit of our mountain range.

[*A bridal party passes over the stage, and goes up the pass.* TELL *gazes at it, leaning on his bow. He is joined by* STUSSI *the Ranger.*

Stussi. There goes the cloister bailiff's bridal train
Of Mörlischachen. A rich fellow he!
And has some half score pastures on the Alps.
He goes to fetch his bride from Imisee.
At Küssnacht there will be high feast to-night.
Come with us—ev'ry honest man is asked.

Tell. A gloomy guest fits not a wedding feast.

Stussi. If you've a trouble, dash it from your heart!
Take what Heaven sends! The times are heavy now,
And we must snatch at pleasure as it flies.
Here 'tis a bridal, there a burial.

Tell. And oft the one close on the other treads.

Stussi. So runs the world we live in. Everywhere
Mischance befalls and misery enough.
In Glarus there has been a landslip, and
A whole side of the Glärnisch has fallen in.

Tell. How! Do the very hills begin to quake?
There is stability for naught on earth.

Stussi. Of strange things, too, we hear from other parts.
I spoke with one but now, from Baden come,
Who said a knight was on his way to court,
And, as he rode along, a swarm of wasps
Surrounded him, and settling on his horse,
So fiercely stung the beast that it fell dead,
And he proceeded to the court on foot.

Tell. The weak are also furnished with a sting.

[Armgart *enters with several children, and places herself at the entrance of the pass.*

Stussi. 'Tis thought to bode disaster to the land—
Some horrid deeds against the course of Nature.

Tell. Why, every day brings forth such fearful deeds;
There needs no prodigy to herald them.

Stussi. Ay, happy he who tills his field in peace,
And sits at home untroubled with his kin.

Tell. The very meekest can not be at peace
If his ill neighbour will not let him rest.

[Tell *looks frequently with restless expectation toward the top of the pass.*

Stussi. So fare you well! You're waiting some one here?
Tell. I am.
Stussi. God speed you safely to your home!
You are from Uri, are you not? His Grace
The governor's expected thence to-day.
Traveller. [*Entering.*] Look not to see the governor to-day.
The streams are flooded by the heavy rains,
And all the bridges have been swept away. [TELL *rises.*
Arm. [*Coming forward.*] Gessler not coming?
Stussi. Want you aught with him?
Arm. Alas, I do!
Stussi. Why, then, thus place yourself
Where you obstruct his passage down the pass?
Arm. Here he can not escape me. He must hear me.
Friess. [*Coming hastily down the pass and calls upon the stage.*]
Make way, make way! My lord, the governor,
Is close behind me, riding down the pass. [*Exit* TELL.
Arm. [*Excitedly.*] The Viceroy comes!
[*She goes toward the pass with her children.* GESSLER *and* RUDOLPH DER HARRAS *appear on horseback at the upper end of the pass.*
Stussi. [*To* FRIESSHARDT.] How got ye through the stream,
When all the bridges have been carried down?
Friess. We've fought, friend, with the tempest on the lake;
An Alpine torrent's nothing after that.
Stussi. How! Were you out, then, in that dreadful storm?
Friess. We were! I'll not forget it while I live.
Stussi. Stay, speak——
Friess. I can't—must to the castle haste,
And tell them that the governor's at hand. [*Exit.*
Stussi. If honest men, now, had been in the ship,
It had gone down with every soul on board:
Some folks are proof 'gainst fire and water both.
[*Looking round.*
Where has the huntsman gone with whom I spoke? [*Exit.*

Enter GESSLER *and* RUDOLPH DER HARRAS *on horseback*

Gessl. Say what you will; I am the Emperor's liege,
And how to please him my first thought must be.

He did not send me here to fawn and cringe,
And coax these boors into good humour. No!
Obedience he must have. The struggle's this:
Is King or peasant to be sovereign here?

Arm. Now is the moment! Now for my petition!

Gessl. 'Twas not in sport that I set up the cap
In Altdorf—or to try the people's hearts—
All this I knew before. I set it up
That they might learn to bend those stubborn necks
They carry far too proudly; and I placed
What well I knew their pride could never brook
Full in the road, which they perforce must pass,
That, when their eye fell on it, they might call
That lord to mind whom they too much forget.

Har. But surely, sir, the people have some rights——

Gessl. This is no time to settle what they are.
Great projects are at work, and hatching now.
The imperial house seeks to extend its power.
Those vast designs of conquest which the sire
Has gloriously begun, the son will end.
This petty nation is a stumbling-block—
One way or other it must be put down.

[*They are about to pass on.* Armgart *throws herself down before* Gessler.

Arm. Mercy, lord governor! Oh, pardon, pardon!

Gessl. Why do you cross me on the public road?
Stand back, I say.

Arm. My husband lies in prison;
My wretched orphans cry for bread. Have pity,
Pity, my lord, upon our sore distress!

Har. Who are you? and your husband, what is he?

Arm. A poor wild-hay-man of the Rigiberg,
Kind sir, who on the brow of the abyss
Mows the unowned grass from craggy shelves,
To which the very cattle dare not climb.

Har. [*To* Gessler.] By Heaven! a sad and pitiable life!
I pray you set the wretched fellow free.
How great soever may be his offence,
His horrid trade is punishment enough. [*To* Armgart.

You shall have justice. To the castle bring
Your suit. This is no place to deal with it.
Arm. No, no, I will not stir from where I stand
Until your Grace gives me my husband back.
Six months already has he been shut up,
And waits the sentence of a judge in vain.
Gessl. How! would you force me, woman? Hence! Begone!
Arm. Justice, my lord! Ay, justice! Thou art judge:
Viceregent of the Emperor—of Heaven.
Then do thy duty: as thou hopest for justice
From Him who rules above, show it to us!
Gessl. Hence! Drive this insolent rabble from my sight!
Arm. [*Seizing his horse's reins.*] No, no, by Heaven, I've nothing more to lose.—
Thou stir'st not, Viceroy, from this spot, until
Thou do'st me fullest justice! Knit thy brows,
And roll thine eyes—I fear not. Our distress
Is so extreme, so boundless, that we care
No longer for thine anger.
Gessl. Woman, hence!
Give way, or else my horse shall ride you down.
Arm. Well, let it!—there——
[*Throws her children and herself upon the ground before him.*
Here on the ground I lie,
I and my children. Let the wretched orphans
Be trodden by thy horse into the dust!
It will not be the worst that thou hast done.
Har. Are you mad, woman?
Arm. [*Continuing with vehemence.*] Many a day thou hast
Trampled the Emperor's lands beneath thy feet!
Oh, I am but a woman! Were I man,
I'd find some better thing to do than here
Lie grovelling in the dust!
[*The music of the bridal party is again heard from the top of the pass, but more softly.*
Gessl. Where are my knaves?
Drag her away, lest I forget myself,

And do some deed I may repent me of.

Har. My lord, the servants can not force their way;
The pass is blocked up by a bridal train.

Gessl. Too mild a ruler am I to this people;
Their tongues are all too bold—nor have they yet
Been tamed to due submission, as they shall be.
I must take order for the remedy;
I will subdue this stubborn mood of theirs,
This braggart spirit of freedom I will crush,
I will proclaim a new law through the land;
I will——

[*An arrow pierces him—he puts his hand on his heart, and is about to sink—with a feeble voice,*

O God, have mercy on my soul!

Har. My lord! my lord! O God! What's this? Whence came it?

Arm. [*Starts up.*] Dead, dead! He reels, he falls! 'Tis in his heart!

Har. [*Springs from his horse.*] Horror of horrors! Heavenly powers! Sir Knight,
Address yourself for mercy to your God!
You are a dying man.

Gessl. That shot was Tell's!

[*He slides from his horse into the arms of* RUDOLPH DER HARRAS, *who lays him down upon the bench.* TELL *appears above upon the rocks.*

Tell. Thou know'st the marksman—I, and I alone!
Now are our homesteads free, and innocence
From thee is safe: thou'lt be our curse no more!

[TELL *disappears. People rush in.*

Stussi. What is the matter? Tell me what has happened?

Arm. The Viceroy's shot—pierced by a crossbow bolt!

People. [*Running in.*] Who has been shot?

[*While the foremost of the marriage party are coming on the stage, the hindmost are still upon the heights. The music continues.*

Har. He's bleeding fast to death.
Away, for help—pursue the murderer!—
Unhappy man, is this to be your end?

You would not listen to my warning words.
Stussi. By Heaven, his cheek is pale! Life's ebbing fast.
Many Voices. Who did the deed?
Har. What! Are the people mad,
That they make music to a murder? Silence!—
[*Music breaks off suddenly. People continue to flock in.*
Speak, if you can, my lord. Have you no charge
To trust me with?
[GESSLER *makes signs with his hand, which he repeats with vehemence when he finds they are not understood.*
Where shall I take you to?
To Küssnacht? What you say I can't make out.
Oh, do not grow impatient! Leave all thought
Of earthly things and make your peace with Heaven.
[*The whole marriage party gather round the dying man.*
Stussi. See there! how pale he grows! Death's gathering now
About his heart—his eyes grow dim and glazed.
Arm. [*Holds up a child.*] Look, children, how a tyrant dies!
Har. Mad hag!
Have you no touch of feeling, that your eyes
Gloat on a sight so horrible as this?—
Help me—take hold! What, will not one assist
To pull the torturing arrow from his breast?
Women. What! touch the man whom God's own hand has struck!
Har. All curses light on you! [*Draws his sword.*
Stussi. [*Seizes his arm.*] Gently, Sir Knight!
Your power is at end. 'Twere best forbear.
Our country's foe has fallen. We will brook
No further violence. We are free men.
All. The country's free!
Har. And is it come to this?
Fear and obedience at an end so soon?
[*To the soldiers of the guard who are thronging in.*
You see, my friends, the bloody piece of work
Has here been done. 'Tis now too late for help,
And to pursue the murderer were vain.
We've other things to think of. On to Küssnacht,

And let us save that fortress for the King!
For in a moment such as this, all ties
Of order, fealty, and faith, are rent,
And we can trust to no man's loyalty.

[*As he is going out with the soldiers, six* Fratres Misericordiæ *appear.*

Arm. Here comes the brotherhood of mercy. Room!

Stussi. The victim's slain, and now the ravens stoop.

Brothers of Mercy. [*Form a semicircle round the body, and sing in solemn tones.*]

Death hurries on with hasty stride,
No respite man from him may gain;
He cuts him down, when life's full tide
Is throbbing strong in every vein.
Prepared or not the call to hear,
He must before his Judge appear.

[*While they are repeating the last two lines, the curtain falls.*

ACT V

SCENE I.—A COMMON NEAR ALTDORF. IN THE BACKGROUND TO THE RIGHT THE KEEP OF URI, WITH THE SCAFFOLD STILL STANDING, AS IN THE THIRD SCENE OF THE FIRST ACT. TO THE LEFT THE VIEW OPENS UPON NUMEROUS MOUNTAINS, ON ALL OF WHICH SIGNAL FIRES ARE BURNING. DAY IS BREAKING, AND DISTANT BELLS ARE HEARD RINGING IN SEVERAL DIRECTIONS

Ruodi, Kuoni, Werni, Master Mason, *and many other country people, also women and children*

Ruodi. See there! The beacons on the mountain heights!

Mason. Hark how the bells above the forest toll!

Ruodi. The enemy's routed!

Mason. And the forts are stormed!

Ruodi. And we of Uri, do we still endure
Upon our native soil the tyrant's keep?

Are we the last to strike for liberty?

Mason. Shall the yoke stand, that was to curb our necks?
Up! Tear it to the ground!

All. Down, down with it!

Ruodi. Where is the Stier of Uri?

Uri. Here. What would ye?

Ruodi. Up to your tower, and wind us such a blast
As shall resound afar, from peak to peak;
Rousing the echoes of each glen and hill,
To rally swiftly all the mountain men!

[*Exit* Stier of Uri—*Enter* Walter Fürst.

Fürst. Stay, stay, my friends! As yet we have not learned
What has been done in Unterwald and Schwytz.
Let's wait till we receive intelligence!

Ruodi. Wait, wait for what? The accursed tyrant's dead,
And on us freedom's glorious day has dawned!

Mason. How! Are these flaming signals not enough,
That blaze on every mountain top around?

Ruodi. Come all, fall to—come, men and women, all!
Destroy the scaffold! Burst the arches! Down,
Down with the walls, let not a stone remain!

Mason. Come, comrades, come! We built it, and we know
How best to hurl it down.

All. Come! Down with it!

[*They fall upon the building on every side.*

Fürst. The floodgate's burst! They're not to be restrained.

[*Enter* Melchthal *and* Baumgarten.

Melch. What! Stands the fortress still, when Sarnen lies
In ashes, and the Rossberg's in our hands?

Fürst. You, Melchthal, here? D'ye bring us liberty?
Are all the Cantons from our tyrants freed?

Melch. We've swept them from the soil. Rejoice, my friend:
Now, at this very moment, while we speak,
There's not one tyrant left in Switzerland!

Fürst. How did you get the forts into your power?

Melch. Rudenz it was who by a bold assault
With manly valour mastered Sarnen's keep.
The Rossberg I had stormed the night before.

But hear, what chanced. Scarce had we driven the foe
Forth from the keep, and given it to the flames,
That now rose crackling upward to the skies,
When from the blaze rushed Diethelm, Gessler's page,
Exclaiming, "Lady Bertha will be burned!"

Fürst. Good Heavens!

[*The beams of the scaffold are heard falling.*

Melch. 'Twas she herself. Here had she been
By Gessler's orders secretly immured.
Up sprang Rudenz in frenzy. For even now
The beams and massive posts were crashing down,
And through the stifling smoke the piteous shrieks
Of the unhappy lady.

Fürst. Is she saved?

Melch. 'Twas not a time to hesitate or pause!
Had he been but our baron, and no more,
We should have been most chary of our lives;
But he was our confederate, and Bertha
Honoured the people. So, without a thought,
We risked the worst, and rushed into the flames.

Fürst. But is she saved?

Melch. She is. Rudenz and I
Bore her between us from the blazing pile.
With crashing timbers toppling all around.
And when she had revived, the danger past,
And raised her eyes to look upon the sun,
The baron fell upon my breast; and then
A silent vow between us two was sworn—
A vow that, welded in yon furnace heat,
Will last through ev'ry shock of time and fate.

Fürst. Where is the Landenberg?

Melch. Across the Brünig.
'Twas not my fault he bore his sight away,
He who had robbed my father of his eyes!
He fled—I followed—overtook him soon,
And dragged him to my father's feet. The sword
Already quivered o'er the caitiff's head,
When from the pity of the blind old man,
He wrung the life which, craven-like, he begged.

He swore Urphede,[1] never to return:
He'll keep his oath, for he has felt our arm.

Fürst. Oh, well for you, you have not stained with blood
Our spotless victory!

Children. [*Running across the stage with fragments of wood.*]
We're free! we're free!

Fürst. Oh! what a joyous scene! These children will
Remember it when all their heads are gray.

[*Girls bring in the cap upon a pole. The whole stage is filled with people.*

Ruodi. Here is the cap, to which we were to bow!

Baum. What shall we do with it? Do you decide!

Fürst. Heavens! 'Twas beneath this cap my grandson stood!

Several Voices. Destroy the emblem of the tyrant's power!
Let it be burned!

Fürst. No. Rather be preserved;
'Twas once the instrument of despots—now
'Twill of our freedom be a lasting sign.

[PEASANTS, *men, women, and children, some standing, others sitting upon the beams of the shattered scaffold, all picturesquely grouped, in a large semicircle.*

Melch. Thus, now, my friends, with light and merry hearts,
We stand upon the wreck of tyranny;
And gloriously the work has been fulfilled,
Which we at Rootli pledged ourselves to do.

Fürst. No, not fulfilled. The work is but begun:
Courage and concord firm, we need them both;
For, be assured, the King will make all speed
To avenge his Viceroy's death, and reinstate,
By force of arms, the tyrant we've expelled.

Melch. Why, let him come, with all his armaments!
The foe's expelled that pressed us from within;
The foe without we are prepared to meet!

Ruodi. The passes to our Cantons are but few;

[1] The Urphedé was an oath of peculiar force. When a man, who was at feud with another, invaded his lands and was worsted, he often made terms with his enemy by swearing the Urphede, by which he bound himself to depart, and never to return with a hostile intention.

These with our bodies we will block—we will!

Baum. Knit are we by a league will ne'er be rent,
And all his armies shall not make us quail.

[*Enter* Rösselmann *and* Stauffacher.

Rössel. [*Speaking as he enters.*] These are the awful judgments of the Lord!

Peas. What is the matter?

Rössel. In what times we live!

Fürst. Say on, what is't?—Ha, Werner, is it you?
What tidings?

Peas. What's the matter?

Rössel. Hear and wonder!

Stauff. We are released from one great cause of dread.

Rössel. The Emperor is murdered!

Fürst. Gracious Heaven!

[Peasants *rise up and throng round* Stauffacher.

All. Murdered!—the Emp'ror? What! The Emp'ror! Hear!

Melch. Impossible! How came you by the news?

Stauff. 'Tis true! Near Bruck, by the assassin's hand,
King Albert fell. A most trustworthy man,
John Müller, from Schaffhausen, brought the news.

Fürst. Who dared commit so horrible a deed?

Stauff. The doer makes the deed more dreadful still;
It was his nephew, his own brother's son,
Duke John of Austria, who struck the blow.

Melch. What drove him to so dire a parricide?

Stauff. The Emp'ror kept his patrimony back,
Despite his urgent importunities;
'Twas said, he meant to keep it for himself,
And with a mitre to appease the duke.
However this may be, the duke gave ear
To the ill counsel of his friends in arms;
And with the noble lords, Von Eschenbach,
Von Tegerfeld, Von Wart and Palm, resolved,
Since his demands for justice were despised,
With his own hands to take revenge at least.

Fürst. But say—the dreadful deed, how was it done?

Stauff. The King was riding down from Stein to Baden.

Upon his way to join the court at Rheinfeld—
With him a train of high-born gentlemen,
And the young Princes John and Leopold;
And when they'd reached the ferry of the Reuss,
The assassins forced their way into the boat,
To separate the Emperor from his suite.
His Highness landed, and was riding on
Across a fresh-ploughed field—where once, they say,
A mighty city stood in pagan times—
With Hapsburg's ancient turrets in sight,
That was the cradle of his princely race,
When Duke John plunged a dagger in his throat,
Palm ran him through the body with his lance,
And Eschenbach, to end him, clove his skull;
So down he sank, all weltering in his blood,
On his own soil, by his own kinsmen slain.
Those on the opposite bank beheld the deed,
But, parted by the stream, could only raise
An unavailing cry of loud lament.
A poor old woman, sitting by the way,
Raised him, and on her breast he bled to death.

Melch. Thus has he dug his own untimely grave,
Who sought insatiably to grasp at all.

Stauff. The country round is filled with dire alarm,
The passes are blockaded everywhere,
And sentinels on ev'ry frontier set;
E'en ancient Zurich barricades her gates,
That have stood open for these thirty years,
Dreading the murd'rers and th' avengers more.
For cruel Agnes comes, the Hungarian Queen,
By all her sex's tenderness untouched,
Armed with the thunders of the ban, to wreak
Dire vengeance for her parent's royal blood,
On the whole race of those that murdered him—
Their servants, children, children's children—yea,
Upon the stones that built their castle walls!
Deep has she sworn a vow to immolate
Whole generations on her father's tomb,
And bathe in blood as in the dew of May.

Melch. Is't known which way the murderers have fled?

Stauff. No sooner had they done the deed than they
Took flight, each following a different route,
And parted ne'er to see each other more.
Duke John must still be wand'ring in the mountains.

Fürst. And thus their crime has borne no fruit for them.
Revenge bears never fruit. Itself, it is
The dreadful food it feeds on; its delight
Is murder—its satiety despair.

Stauff. The assassins reap no profit by their crime;
But we shall pluck with unpolluted hands
The teeming fruits of their most bloody deed.
For we are ransomed from our heaviest fear;
The direst foe of liberty has fallen,
And 'tis reported that the crown will pass
From Hapsburg's house into another line;
The empire is determined to assert
Its old prerogative of choice, I hear.

Fürst and Several Others. Is any named?

Stauff. The Count of Luxembourg's
Already chosen by the general voice.

Fürst. 'Tis well we stood so stanchly by the empire!
Now we may hope for justice, and with cause.

Stauff. The Emperor will need some valiant friends.
He will 'gainst Austria's vengeance be our shield.

[*The peasantry embrace. Enter* Sacristan *with Imperial messenger.*

Sacris. Here are the worthy chiefs of Switzerland!

Rösselmann and Several Others. Sacristan, what news?

Sacris. A courier brings this letter.

All. [*To* Walter Fürst.] Open and read it.

Fürst. [*Reading.*] "To the worthy men
Of Uri, Schwytz, and Unterwald, the Queen
Elizabeth sends grace and all good wishes!"

Many Voices. What wants the Queen with us? Her reign is done.

Fürst. [*Reads.*] "In the great grief and doleful widowhood,
In which the bloody exit of her lord
Has plunged the Queen, still in her mind she bears

The ancient faith and love of Switzerland."

Melch. She ne'er did that in her prosperity.

Rössel. Hush, let us hear!

Fürst. [*Reads.*] "And she is well assured,
Her people will in due abhorrence hold
The perpetrators of this damnèd deed.
On the three Cantons, therefore, she relies,
That they in nowise lend the murderers aid;
But rather, that they loyally assist,
To give them up to the avenger's hand,
Remembering the love and grace which they
Of old received from Rudolph's royal house."

[*Symptoms of dissatisfaction among the peasantry.*

Many Voices. The love and grace!

Stauff. Grace from the father we, indeed, received,
But what have we to boast of from the son?
Did he confirm the charter of our freedom,
As all preceding emperors had done?
Did he judge righteous judgment, or afford
Shelter, or stay, to innocence oppressed?
Nay, did he e'en give audience to the men
We sent to lay our grievances before him?
Not one of all these things did the King do,
And had we not ourselves achieved our rights
By our own stalwart hands, the wrongs we bore
Had never touched him. Gratitude to him!
Within these vales he sowed no seeds of that;
He stood upon an eminence—he might
Have been a very father to his people,
But all his aim and pleasure was to raise
Himself and his own house: and now may those
Whom he has aggrandized lament for him!

Fürst. We will not triumph in his fall, nor now
Recall to mind the wrongs that we endured.
Far be't from us! Yet, that we should avenge
The sovereign's death, who never did us good,
And hunt down those who ne'er molested us,
Becomes us not, nor is our duty. Love
Must be a tribute free, and unconstrained;

From all enforced duties death absolves,
And unto him we owe no further debt.

Melch. And if the Queen laments within her bower,
Accusing Heaven in sorrow's wild despair,
Here see a people, from its anguish freed,
To that same Heaven send up its thankful praise.
Who would reap tears, must sow the seeds of love.

[*Exit the Imperial Courier.*

Stauff. [*To the people.*] But where is Tell? Shall he, our freedom's founder,
Alone be absent from our festival?
He did the most—endured the worst of all.
Come—to his dwelling let us all repair,
And bid the saviour of our country hail! [*Exeunt omnes.*

SCENE II.—INTERIOR OF TELL'S COTTAGE. A FIRE BURNING ON THE HEARTH. THE OPEN DOOR SHOWS THE SCENE OUTSIDE

HEDWIG, WALTER, WILHELM

Hedw. My own dear boys! your father comes to-day;
He lives, is free, and we and all are free;
The country owes its liberty to him!

Walt. And I, too, mother, bore my part in it!
I must be named with him. My father's shaft
Ran my life close, but yet I never flinched.

Hedw. [*Embracing him.*] Yes, yes, thou art restored to me again!
Twice have I seen thee given to my sad eyes,
Twice suffered all a mother's pangs for thee!
But this is past—I have you both, boys—both!
And your dear father will be back to-day.

[*A* MONK *appears at the door.*

Wilh. See, mother, yonder stands a holy friar;
He comes for alms, no doubt.

Hedw. Go lead him in,
That we may give him cheer, and make him feel
That he has come into the house of joy.

[*Exit, and returns immediately with a cup.*

Wilh. [*To the* MONK.] Come in, good man. Mother will give you food!

Walt. Come in and rest, then go refreshed away!

Monk. [*Glancing round in terror, with unquiet looks.*] Where am I? In what country? Tell me.

Walt. How!
Are you bewildered, that you know not where?
You are at Bürglen, in the land of Uri,
Just at the entrance of the Shechenthal.

Monk. [*To* HEDWIG.] Are you alone? Your husband, is he here?

Hedw. I am expecting him. But what ails you, man?
There's something in your looks that omens ill!
Whoe'er you be, you are in want—take that.
[*Offers him the cup.*

Monk. Howe'er my sinking heart may yearn for food,
Naught will I taste till you have promised first——

Hedw. Touch not my garments; come not near me, monk!
You must stand farther back, if I'm to hear you.

Monk. Oh, by this hearth's bright, hospitable blaze,
By your dear children's heads, which I embrace——
[*Grasps the boys.*

Hedw. Stand back, I say! What is your purpose, man?
Back from my boys! You are no monk—no, no,
Beneath the robe you wear peace should abide,
But peace abides not in such looks as yours.

Monk. I am the wretchedest of living men.

Hedw. The heart is never deaf to wretchedness;
But your look freezes up my inmost soul.

Walt. [*Springs up.*] Mother, here's father!

Hedw. Oh, my God!
[*Is about to follow, trembles and stops.*

Wilh. [*Running after his brother.*] My father!

Walt. [*Without.*] Here, here once more!

Wilh. [*Without.*] My father, my dear father!

Tell. [*Without.*] Yes, here once more! Where is your mother, boys? [*They enter.*

Walt. There at the door she stands, and can no further,
She trembles so with terror and with joy.

Tell. O Hedwig, Hedwig, mother of my children;
God has been kind and helpful in our woes.
No tyrant's hand shall e'er divide us more.

Hedw. [*Falling on his neck.*] O Tell, what anguish have I borne for thee! [MONK *becomes attentive.*

Tell. Forget it now, and live for joy alone!
I'm here again with you! This is my cot!
I stand again upon mine own hearthstone!

Wilh. But, father, where's your crossbow? Not with you?

Tell. Thou shalt not ever see it more, my boy.
Within a holy shrine it has been placed,
And in the chase shall ne'er be used again.

Hedw. O Tell! Tell! [*Steps back, dropping his hand.*

Tell. What alarms thee, dearest wife?

Hedw. How—how dost thou return to me? This hand—
Dare I take hold of it? This hand—O God!——

Tell. [*With firmness and animation.*] Has shielded you and set my country free;
Freely I raise it in the face of Heaven.

[MONK *gives a sudden start—he looks at him.*

Who is this friar here!

Hedw. Ah, I forgot him;
Speak thou with him; I shudder at his presence.

Monk. [*Stepping nearer.*] Are you the Tell who slew the governor?

Tell. Yes, I am he. I hide the fact from no man.

Monk. And you are Tell! Ah! it is God's own hand,
That hath conducted me beneath your roof.

Tell. [*Examining him closely.*] You are no monk. Who are you?

Monk. You have slain
The governor, who did you wrong. I, too,
Have slain a foe, who robbed me of my rights.
He was no less your enemy than mine.
I've rid the land of him!

Tell. [*Drawing back.*] You are—oh, horror!—
In—children, children—in, without a word.
Go, my dear wife! Go! go!—Unhappy man,
You should be——

Hedw. Heav'ns, who is it?
Tell. Do not ask.
Away! away! the children must not hear it—
Out of the house—away! You must not rest
'Neath the same roof with this unhappy man!
Hedw. Alas! What is it? Come. [*Exit with the children.*
Tell. [*To the* MONK.] You are the Duke
Of Austria—I know it. You have slain
The Emperor, your uncle and liege lord!
John. He robbed me of my patrimony.
Tell. How!
Slain him—your King, your uncle! And the earth
Still bears you! And the sun still shines on you!
John. Tell, hear me; are you——
Tell. Reeking, with the blood
Of him that was your Emperor, your kinsman,
Dare you set foot within my spotless house,
Dare to an honest man to show your face,
And claim the rites of hospitality?
John. I hoped to find compassion at your hands.
You took, like me, revenge upon your foe!
Tell. Unhappy man! Dare you confound the crime
Of blood-imbrued ambition with the act
Forced on a father in mere self-defence?
Had you to shield your children's darling heads,
To guard your fireside's sanctuary—ward off
The last, the direst doom from all you loved?
To Heaven I raise my unpolluted hands,
To curse your act and you! I have avenged
That holy nature which you have profaned.
I have no part with you! You murdered, I
Have shielded all that was most dear to me.
John. You cast me off to comfortless despair!
Tell. I shrink with horror while I talk with you.
Hence, on the dread career you have begun!
Cease to pollute the home of innocence! [JOHN *turns to depart.*
John. I can not and I will not live this life!
Tell. And yet my soul bleeds for you. Gracious Heaven,
So young, of such a noble line, the grandson

Of Rudolph, once my lord and Emperor,
An outcast—murderer—standing at my door,
The poor man's door—a suppliant, in despair!
[*Covers his face.*

John. If you have power to weep, oh, let my fate
Move your compassion—it is horrible!
I am—say, rather was—a prince. I might
Have been most happy, had I only curbed
The impatience of my passionate desires:
But envy gnawed my heart—I saw the youth
Of mine own cousin Leopold endowed
With honour, and enriched with broad domains,
The while myself, of equal age with him,
In abject slavish nonage was kept back.

Tell. Unhappy man, your uncle knew you well,
When from you land and subjects he withheld!
You, by your mad and desperate act, have set
A fearful seal upon his wise resolve.
Where are the bloody partners of your crime?

John. Where'er the avenging furies may have borne them;
I have not seen them since the luckless deed.

Tell. Know you the empire's ban is out—that you
Are interdicted to your friends, and given
An outlawed victim to your enemies?

John. Therefore I shun all public thoroughfares,
And venture not to knock at any door—
I turn my footsteps to the wilds, and through
The mountains roam, a terror to myself!
From mine own self I shrink with horror back,
If in a brook I see my ill-starred form!
If you have pity or a human heart—— [*Falls down before him.*

Tell. Stand up, stand up! I say.

John. Not till you give
Your hand in promise of assistance to me.

Tell. Can I assist you? Can a sinful man?
Yet get ye up—how black soe'er your crime—
You are a man. I, too, am one. From Tell
Shall no one part uncomforted. I will
Do all that lies within my power.

John. [*Springs up and grasps him ardently by the hand.*]
O Tell,
You save me from the terrors of despair!

Tell. Let go my hand! You must away. You can not
Remain here undiscovered, and, discovered,
You can not count on succour. Which way, then,
Would you be going? Where do you hope to find
A place of rest?

John. Alas! I know not where.

Tell. Hear, then, what Heaven unto my heart suggests.
You must to Italy—to Saint Peter's city—
There cast yourself at the Pope's feet—confess
Your guilt to him, and ease your laden soul!

John. Will he not to the avengers yield me up?

Tell. Whate'er he does, accept it as from God.

John. But how am I to reach that unknown land?
I have no knowledge of the way, and dare not
Attach myself to other travellers.

Tell. I will describe the road, so mark me well!
You must ascend, keeping along the Reuss,
Which from the mountains dashes wildly down.

John. [*In alarm.*] What! See the Reuss? The witness of my deed!

Tell. The road you take lies through the river's gorge,
And many a cross proclaims where travellers
Have been by avalanches done to death.

John. I have no fear for Nature's terrors, so
I can appease the torments of my soul.

Tell. At every cross kneel down and expiate
Your crime with burning penitential tears—
And if you 'scape the perils of the pass,
And are not whelmed beneath the drifted snows,
That from the frozen peaks come sweeping down,
You'll reach the bridge that's drenched with drizzling spray.
Then if it give not way beneath your guilt,
When you have left it safely in your rear,
Before you frowns the gloomy Gate of Rocks,
Where never sun did shine. Proceed through this,
And you will reach a bright and gladsome vale.

Yet must you hurry on with hasty steps,
You must not linger in the haunts of peace.
John. O Rudolph, Rudolph, royal grandsire! thus
Thy grandson first sets foot within thy realms!
Tell. Ascending still, you gain the Gotthardt's heights,
Where are the tarns, the everlasting tarns,
That from the streams of heaven itself are fed,
There to the German soil you bid farewell;
And thence, with sweet descent, another stream
Leads you to Italy, your promised land.
[*Ranz des Vaches sounded on Alp-horns is heard without.*
But I hear voices! Hence!
Hedw. [*Hurrying in.*] Where art thou, Tell?
My father comes, and in exulting bands
All the confederates approach.
John. [*Covering himself.*] Woe's me!
I dare not tarry 'mong these happy men!
Tell. Go, dearest wife, and give this man to eat.
Spare not your bounty; for his road is long,
And one where shelter will be hard to find.
Quick—they approach!
Hedw. Who is he?
Tell. Do not ask!
And when he quits you, turn your eyes away,
So that they do not see which way he goes.
[John *advances hastily toward* Tell, *but he beckons him aside, and exit. When both have left the stage, the scene changes, and discloses—in*

SCENE III—THE WHOLE VALLEY BEFORE TELL'S HOUSE, THE HEIGHTS WHICH INCLOSE IT OCCUPIED BY PEASANTS, GROUPED INTO TABLEAUX. SOME ARE SEEN CROSSING A LOFTY BRIDGE, WHICH CROSSES THE SHECHEN. WALTER FÜRST WITH THE TWO BOYS. WERNER AND STAUFFACHER COME FORWARD. OTHERS THRONG AFTER THEM. WHEN TELL APPEARS, ALL RECEIVE HIM WITH LOUD CHEERS

All. Long live brave Tell, our sh[illegible]

[*While those in front are crowding round* TELL, *and embracing him*, RUDENZ *and* BERTHA *appear. The former salutes the peasantry, the latter embraces* HEDWIG. *The music from the mountains continues to play. When it has stopped*, BERTHA *steps into the centre of the crowd.*

Bertha. Peasants! Confederates! Into your league
Receive me, who was happily the first
That found deliverance in the land of freedom.
To your brave hands I now intrust my rights.
Will you protect me as your citizen?

Peas. Ay, that we will, with life and goods!

Bertha. 'Tis well!
And now to him [*turning to* RUDENZ] I frankly give my hand—
A free Swiss maiden to a free Swiss man!

Rud. And from this moment all my serfs are free!

[*Music, and the curtain falls.*



VICTOR HUGO

RUY BLAS

BY

VICTOR MARIE HUGO

Victor Marie Hugo was born in Besançon, France, February 26, 1802, and was the youngest of three brothers. His father, General Hugo, was a native of Lorraine; his mother, of Vendée. The father's military duties led him to Corsica (1802–'05), to Paris (1805–'07), to Italy (1807–'08), again to Paris (1808–'11), to Spain (1811–'12), and finally to Paris, and the greater part of young Victor's early education was picked up by the way. He was at the Feuillantines, in Paris, in 1809–'11, and in 1813–'15; in Madrid, 1812; and he finished his school-days at the École Polytechnique, where he read mathematics and wrote poetry. His first volume of poems (1822) brought him a pension of a thousand francs, and on October 12, 1822, he married Adèle Foucher. He soon published two more volumes of poems, and the remarkable romances "Hans d'Islande" (1825) and "Bug-Jargal" (1826). "Cromwell" appeared in 1826. This was not adapted for presentation, but its preface sounded the war-cry against the classicism of the preceding age, and brought on the great battle between the "romanticists" and the "classicists," which began in earnest with "Hernani" in 1830. The years from 1826 to 1842 were the period of his great poetic melodramas, "five-act lyrics" as they have been called. "Hernani" was followed by "Marion Delorme" (1831); "Le Roi s'Amuse" (1832), better known perhaps as "Rigoletto"; "Lucrèce Borgia" (1833); "Marie Tudor" (1833); "Angelo" (1835); "Ruy Blas" (1838); and the unsuccessful trilogy of "Les Burgraves" (1842). In 1831 he had published his great historical novel "Notre Dame de Paris," and in 1841 was chosen to the Academy, after standing three times unsuccessfully. Until 1830 Hugo had been a royalist; from 1830 to 1848 he was a Napoleonist of somewhat doubtful constancy; after the *coup d'état* (1851) he withdrew to Jersey, and two years later to Guernsey, where he remained until 1870, producing in the meantime many works, among others "Les Misérables" (1862) and the study "William Shakespeare" (1864). He was in Paris during the siege, an experience commemorated in his "L'Année Terrible" (1872). His later work shows a great decline of his powers. The last published during his lifetime was the drama "Torquemada" (1882). He died in Paris, May 22, 1885.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THREE sorts of spectators compose what we are accustomed to call the play-going public. Firstly, women; secondly, thinkers; and thirdly, the general crowd. That which the last-named chiefly requires in a dramatic work is action; what most attracts women is passion; but what the thoughtful seek above all else is the portrayal of human nature. If one studies attentively these three classes of spectators this may be remarked; the crowd is so delighted with incident, that often it cares little for characters and passions.[1] Women, whom action likewise interests, are so absorbed in the development of emotion, that they little heed the representation of characters. As for the thoughtful, they so much desire to see characters, that is to say living men, on the scene, that though they willingly accept passion as a natural element in a dramatic work, they are almost troubled by the incidents. Thus what the mass desires on the stage is sensational action; what the women seek is emotion; and what the thoughtful crave is food for meditation. All demand pleasure—the first, the pleasure of the eyes; the second, the gratification of the feelings; the last, mental enjoyment. Thus on our scene are three distinct sorts of work; the one common and inferior, the two others illustrious and superior, but all supplying a want: melodrama for the crowd; tragedy which

[1] That is to say, style. For if action can in many cases express itself by action alone, passions and characters, with few exceptions, are expressed by speech. Now the words of the drama—words fixed and not fluctuating—form style. Let the personage speak as he should speak, *sibi constet*, says Horace. All is in that.

analyzes passion for the women; and for the thinkers, comedy that paints human nature.

Let us say, in passing, that we do not lay down an infallible law, and we entreat the reader to make for himself the restrictions which our opinions may contain. Rules always admit of exceptions; we know well that the crowd is a great body, in which all qualities are to be found—the instinct for the beautiful and the taste for mediocrity, love of the ideal and liking for the matter-of-fact. We know also that every great intellect ought to be feminine on the tender side of the heart; and we are aware that, thanks to that mysterious law which attracts the sexes to each other, as well mentally as bodily, very often a woman is a thinker. This understood, and after again beseeching the reader not to attach too rigid a meaning to our statement, there only remains for us to proceed.

To every man who considers seriously the three sorts of spectators we have just indicated it will be evident that all are to be justified. The women are right in wishing to have their hearts touched; the thinkers are right in desiring to be taught; and the crowd is not wrong in wishing to be amused. From these established facts the laws of the drama are deduced. In truth, that fiery barrier called the footlights separates the world of reality from that ideal world where the dramatist's art is to create, and make live in conditions combined of art and Nature, characters—that is to say, and we repeat it, men; into these men and these characters to fling the passions which develop some and modify others; and at last, in the conflict of these characters and these passions with the great laws of Providence to show human life—that is to say events, great and small, pathetic, comic, and terrible, which prove for the heart what we call interest, and for the mind what may be considered the truths of moral philosophy; such is the aim of the drama. One sees that the drama is tragedy by its illustration of the passions, and comedy by its portrayal of characters. The mixed drama is the third great form of the art, comprising, encircling, and making fruitful the two others. Corneille and Molière would remain independent of each other if Shakespeare were not between them, giving to Corneille his left hand, and to Molière his right. In this manner the two opposite electric forces of

comedy and tragedy meet, and the spark struck out is the drama.

In explaining, as he understands them, and as he has already often stated, the laws and the end of the drama, the author is not ignorant of the limitation of his own powers. He defines now—and let it be so understood—not what he has done, but what he has endeavoured to do. He shows what his aim was. Nothing more.

We can but write a few lines at the beginning of this book; we have not space for necessary details. Let us then be permitted to pass on, without dwelling otherwise on the transition from the general ideas which we have just indicated, and which in our opinion, the conditions of the ideal being maintained, rule the entire art, to some of the special reflections which this drama, "Ruy Blas," will suggest to the attentive mind.

And first, to take only one side of the question, from the point of view of the philosophy of history, what is the spirit of this drama? Let us explain. At the moment when a monarchy is about to fall several phenomena may be observed. First, the nobility has a tendency to break up, and in dissolving divides after this fashion:

The kingdom totters, the dynasty destroys itself, law decays; political unity crumbles away by the action of intrigue; the best born of society are corrupt and degenerate; a mortal enfeeblement is felt on all sides without and within; great purposes of the state fall low, and only little ones stand forth—a mournful public spectacle; more police, more soldiers, more taxes; every one divines the end has come. Hence among all there is the weariness of expectancy and fear of the future, distrust of all men, and general discouragement, with profound discontent. As the malady of the state is in the head, the nobility, who are the nearest, are the first attacked. What becomes of them then? One party, the least worthy and the least generous, remains at court. All will soon be ingulfed, there is no time to be lost, men must hasten to enrich and aggrandize themselves and profit by circumstances. Each thinks only of himself. Without pity for the country each man acquires a little private fortune in some department of the public evil. He is courtier and minister, and hastens to be prosperous and power-

ful. He is clever and unscrupulous, and he succeeds. Offices of the state, honours, places, money, they take all, and covet all, and pillage everywhere; they live only for ambition and cupidity. They hide the evils which human infirmity may engender, under a grave exterior. And as this debased life, given up to the excitements of the vanities and pleasures of pride, has for its first condition oblivion of all proper sentiments, a man is made ferocious by leading it. When the day of misfortune arrives some monstrous quality is developed in the fallen courtier, and the man becomes a fiend.

The desperate state of the kingdom drives the other half of the nobility, the best and best born, into another mode of living. They retire to their palaces, their estates and country houses. They have a horror of public affairs, they can do nothing, the end of the world is at hand, what use is it to lament? They must divert themselves, and shut their eyes, live, drink, love, and be merry. Who knows? Have they not yet perhaps a year before them? This said, or even simply thought, the gentleman takes the thing in earnest, multiplies his establishment tenfold, buys horses, enriches women, orders fêtes, pays for orgies, flings away, gives, sells, buys, mortgages, forfeits, devours, gives himself up to money lenders, and sets fire at the four corners to all he has. One fine morning a misfortune happens to him. It is that, though the monarchy goes downhill at great speed, he himself is ruined before it. All is finished, all is burned. Of this fine blazing life there remains not even the smoke that has passed away; some ashes, nothing more. Forgotten and deserted by all except his creditors, the poor gentleman then becomes what he may—a little of the adventurer, a little of the swashbuckler, a little of the Bohemian. He sinks and disappears in the crowd, that great, dull, black mass, which until this day he has scarcely noticed, from afar off, under his feet. He plunges therein and takes refuge there. He has no more gold, but there remains to him the sun, that wealth of those who have nothing. At first he dwelt in the highest society; see, now that he herds with the lowest, and accommodates himself to it, he laughs at his ambitious relative who is rich and powerful; he becomes a philosopher, and compares thieves to courtiers. For the rest he is good-

natured, brave, loyal, and intelligent; a mixture of poet, prince, and scamp; laughing at everything; making his comrades to-day thrash the watch, as formerly he bade his servants, but not doing it himself; combining in his manner, with some grace, the assurance of a marquis with the effrontery of a gipsy; soiled outside, but wholesome within; and having nothing left of the gentleman but his honour which he guards, his name which he hides, and his sword which he shows.

If the double picture we have just drawn is a faithful representation of the state of all monarchies at a given moment, it is especially and in a striking manner true of that of Spain at the close of the seventeenth century. Thus, if the author has succeeded in executing this part of his plan, which he is far from assuming, in the drama before the reader, the first half of the Spanish nobility of that period is depicted in Don Salluste, and the second half in Don Cæsar; the two being cousins, as is seemly.

Here, as throughout, let it be well understood that in sketching our outline of the Castillian nobles toward 1695 we would wish to reserve rare and revered exceptions. Let us continue.

Always in examining this monarchy and this epoch, below the nobility thus divided—and which up to a certain point may be personified in the two men just named—one sees trembling in the shade something great, gloomy, and unrecognised. It is the people. The people for whom is the future but not the present; the people orphans, poor, intelligent, and strong, placed very low, and aspiring very high; bearing on their backs the marks of servitude, and in their hearts the premonitions of genius; the people serfs of the great lords, in their abject misery, in love with the only form which in this decaying society represents for them in divine radiance authority, charity, and fertility. The people should be represented in the character of Ruy Blas.

Now above these three men, who thus considered should make move and be apparent to the spectator three facts, and in these facts all the Spanish monarchy of the seventeenth century—above these men, we say, is a pure and luminous creature, a woman, a queen. Unhappy as wife, because she is as if she had not a husband; unhappy as queen, because she

lives as if without a king; inclining toward those beneath her by royal pity, and also perhaps by womanly instinct, looking downward, while Ruy Blas—personification of the people—looks up.

In the author's opinion, and without wishing to slight what the accessory characters may contribute to the truthfulness of the entire work, those four personages, so grouped, comprise the leading principles which present themselves to the philosophical historian of the Spanish monarchy as it was a hundred and forty years ago. To those four personages we might add a fifth, namely, Charles II. But in history, as in the drama, Charles II of Spain is not a figure, but a shadow.

Now let us hasten to say that what has just been stated is not an explanation of "Ruy Blas." It is only one of the aspects. It is the impression which, if the drama be worth studying seriously and conscientiously, would be produced on the mind from the point of view of the philosophy of history.

But, small as it may be, this drama, like everything in the world, has many aspects, and it can be looked at in many other ways. One can take many views of an idea, as of a mountain. It depends on our position. Let pass, for the sake of making ourselves clear, a comparison that is infinitely too presumptuous. Mont Blanc seen from the Croix-de-Fléchères does not resemble Mont Blanc seen from Sallenches. It is, however, always Mont Blanc.

In the same manner, to descend from a very great thing to a very little one, this drama, of which we have just indicated the historical meaning, presents quite another aspect if we look at it from a still more elevated point of view—that is to say, the purely human. Then Don Salluste would be the personification of absolute egotism, anxiety without rest; Don Cæsar, his opposite in all respects, would be regarded as the type of generosity and thoughtless carelessness; and Ruy Blas would express the spirit and passion of the community, and springing forth the higher in proportion to the violence of their compression; the Queen would exemplify virtue undermined by wearying monotony.

Simply from the literary point of view the aspect of this design, such as it is, entitled "Ruy Blas," would again change.

The three governing forms of the art would appear there personified and summed up. Don Salluste would be the mixed drama; Don Cæsar, comedy; and Ruy Blas, tragedy. The drama provides action, comedy confuses it, and tragedy decides it.

All these aspects are just and true, but not one of them is complete. Absolute truth is only to be found in the entire work. If each finds therein what he seeks, the poet, who does not flatter himself about the remainder, will have attained his end. The philosophical motive of "Ruy Blas" is a people aspiring to a higher state; the human subject is a man who loves a woman; the dramatic interest is a lackey who loves a queen. The crowd who flock every night to witness this work, because in France public attention never fails to be directed to mental efforts, whatever they may be besides, the crowd, we say, see only in "Ruy Blas" the last, the dramatic subject, the lackey; and they are right.

And what we have just said of "Ruy Blas" seems to us applicable to every other production. The old renowned works of the masters are even more remarkable in that they offer more facets to study than others. Tartuffe makes some laugh, and others tremble. Tartuffe is the domestic serpent—the hypocrite; or rather, hypocrisy. He is sometimes a man, and sometimes an idea. Othello is for some but a black man who loves a fair woman; for others he is an upstart who has married a patrician; for some he is a jealous man; for others the personification of jealousy. And this diversity of opinion takes nothing from the fundamental unity of the composition. We have said so elsewhere; there are a thousand branches and one trunk.

If in this work the author has particularly insisted on the historical significance of "Ruy Blas," it is that in his opinion, by its historical meaning—and it is true by that alone—"Ruy Blas" is allied to "Hernani." The grand fact of the condition of the nobles is shown in "Hernani," as in "Ruy Blas," by the side of existing royalty. Only in "Hernani," as an absolute monarchy was not yet established, the nobility still struggled with the King, here by haughtiness, there by the sword, in a mixture of feudalism and rebellion. In 1519 the great lord

lived far from court, in the mountains as bandit like Hernani, or in patriarchal state like Ruy Gomez. Two centuries later the position is changed. The vassals have become courtiers, and if from circumstances the noble has still occasion to conceal his name, it is not to escape from the King, but to elude his creditors. He does not become a bandit, he turns Bohemian. One feels that royal despotism has passed during these long years over the noble heads, bending some and crushing others.

And, if we may be permitted this last word between "Hernani" and "Ruy Blas," two centuries of Spanish life are framed; two great centuries, during which the descendants of Charles V were permitted to rule the world; two centuries of a state which Providence—and it is a remarkable thing—would not prolong another hour, for Charles V[1] was born in 1500, and Charles II died in 1700. In 1700 Louis XIV inherited from Charles V, as in 1800 Napoleon inherited from Louis XIV. These great dynastic apparitions, which from time to time illuminate history, are for the author a beautiful and pathetic spectacle to which his eyes often turn. He tries at times to transfer something of their interest to his works. Thus he has striven to show "Hernani" in the bright light of an aurora, and to cover "Ruy Blas" with the gloom of twilight. In "Hernani" the sun of the House of Austria was rising; in "Ruy Blas" it was setting.

PARIS, November 25, 1838.

[1] Charles V of Germany and I of Spain.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Ruy Blas.
Don Salluste de Bazan.
Don Cæsar de Bazan.
Don Guritan.
The Count de Camporeal.
The Marquis de Santa-Cruz.
The Marquis del Basto.
The Count d'Albe.
The Marquis de Priego.
Don Manuel Arias.
Montazgo.
Don Antonio Ubilla.
Covadenga.
Gudiel.
A Lackey.
An Alcaid.
An Usher.
An Alguazil.
A Page.
Doña Maria de Neubourg, Queen of Spain.
The Duchess d'Albuquerque.
Casilda.
A Duenna.

Ladies, Lords, Privy Councillors, Pages, Duennas, Alguazils, Guards, and Gentleman Ushers.

Madrid, 169—

RUY BLAS

ACT I—DON SALLUSTE

SCENE I.—THE HALL OF DANAÉ IN THE KING'S PALACE AT MADRID. MAGNIFICENT FURNITURE IN THE HALF-FLEMISH STYLE OF PHILIP IV. AT THE LEFT, A LARGE WINDOW WITH SMALL SQUARES OF GLASS SET IN GILT FRAMES. ON EACH SIDE A LOW DOOR LEADING TO SOME INTERIOR APARTMENTS. AT THE BACK, A LARGE GLASS PARTITION WITH GILT FRAMES OPENS BY A GLASS DOOR ON A LONG CORRIDOR. THIS CORRIDOR, WHICH STRETCHES ALL ALONG THE STAGE, IS CONCEALED BY WIDE CURTAINS THAT FALL FROM TOP TO BOTTOM OF THE GLASS PARTITION. A TABLE WITH WRITING MATERIALS, AND AN EASY-CHAIR.

DON SALLUSTE ENTERS BY THE LITTLE DOOR AT THE LEFT, FOLLOWED BY RUY BLAS, AND BY GUDIEL, WHO CARRIES A CASH-BOX AND OTHER PACKAGES AS IF IN PREPARATION FOR A JOURNEY. DON SALLUSTE IS DRESSED IN BLACK VELVET IN THE FASHION OF THE COURT OF CHARLES II, AND WEARS THE GOLDEN FLEECE. OVER HIS BLACK DRESS HE HAS A RICH MANTLE OF LIGHT VELVET EMBROIDERED WITH GOLD AND LINED WITH BLACK SATIN. A SWORD WITH A LARGE HILT. A HAT WITH WHITE FEATHERS. GUDIEL IS IN BLACK AND WEARS A SWORD. RUY BLAS IS IN LIVERY—LEGGINGS AND UNDERCOAT BROWN; OVERCOAT TURNED UP WITH RED AND GOLD. BAREHEADED AND WITHOUT A SWORD

Don Salluste de Bazan, Gudiel, Ruy Blas *at intervals*

DON SALLUSTE. That window open, Ruy Blas—and shut
The door.

[Ruy Blas *obeys, and then, at a sign from* Don Salluste, *goes out by the door at the back.* Don Salluste *walks to the window.*
All here still sleep. 'Tis nearly dawn.
[*He suddenly turns toward* Gudiel.

It is a thunderbolt! Ah, yes, my reign
Is over, Gudiel! Exiled and disgraced,
All lost in but a day. At present, though,
The thing is secret—speak not of it, pray.
Yes, only for a little love affair,
—At my age senseless folly I admit—
And with a nobody—a serving maid
Seduced—ill luck! because she was about
The Queen, who brought the girl from Neubourg here.
This creature wept, complained of me, and dragged
Into the royal chambers her young brat;
Then was I ordered to espouse the girl,
And I refused. They banished me. Me—me
They exiled! After twenty years of work
So difficult, engaging day and night,
Years of ambition. I, the President,
Abhorred by all the Court Alcaids, who named
Me but with dread. Chief of the house Bazan
That is so proud; my credit, power, and all
I did, and had, and dreamed, honours and place
One moment sweeps away, amid the roars
Of laughter of the crowd.

Gudiel. None know it yet,
My lord.

Don Salluste. Ah, but to-morrow! 'Twill be known
To-morrow! We shall then be on our way.
I will not fall. No, no, I'll disappear.
[*He hastens to unbutton his doublet.*
You always fasten me as if I were
A priest. You strain my doublet; and oh, now
I stifle! [*He sits down.*
Ah, with th' air of innocence
I'll dig a deep, dark mine! Chased—chased away! [*He rises.*

Gudiel. Whence came the blow, my lord?

Don Salluste. 'Twas from the Queen.
O Gudiel, I will be revenged. Thou know'st,
Thou understandest me—when thou hast taught
And aided well for twenty years in things
Long past. Thou know'st where turn my darkened thoughts,

As a skilled architect can at a glance
Measure the depth of wells that he has sunk.
I will set out for my Castilian lands,
Estates of Finlas there to brood and plan.
All for a girl! Thou must—for time is short—
Arrange for our departure. First I'd speak
A word at any risk unto the scamp
Thou know'st. It may be that he proves of use.
I know not. But till night I'm master here.
I will have vengeance—how I can not tell;
But I will make it terrible. Go now,
At once get ready—hasten—silent be!
You shall go with me—hasten.

[GUDIEL *bows, and exit.* DON SALLUSTE *calls.*

Ruy Blas!

Ruy Blas. [*Appearing at the door at the back.*] Excellency?

Don Salluste. Within the palace walls
I sleep no more; thus shutters should be closed,
The keys be left.

Ruy Blas. My lord, it shall be done.

Don Salluste. Listen, I beg. In two hours will the Queen,
In coming back from mass unto her room
Of state, pass through the corridor; you must
Be there.

Ruy Blas. I will, my lord.

Don Salluste. [*At the window.*] See you that man
I' the square—a paper to the guard he shows
And passes? Sign to him without a word
That he may enter by the back stairway.

[RUY BLAS *obeys.* DON SALLUSTE *continues, pointing to the little door on the right.*

Before you go look in the guardroom there—
See if three Alguazils on duty are
As yet awake.

Ruy Blas. [*He goes to the door, half opens it, and comes back.*]
My lord, they sleep.

Don Salluste. Speak low.
I shall be wanting you, so go not far
Away. Keep watch that we be not disturbed.

[*Enter* Don Cæsar de Bazan. *Hat staved in. A ragged cloak, which conceals all his dress except stockings that hang loose, and shoes that are split open. Sword of a brawler.*

[*As he enters, he and* Ruy Blas *glance at each other from opposite sides with gestures of surprise.*

Don Salluste. [*Observing them, aside.*] Looks were exchanged!
Can they each other know! [*Exit* Ruy Blas.

SCENE II

Don Sallusté, Don Cæsar

Don Salluste. So, bandit, you are here!
Don Cæsar. Yes, cousin, yes.
Behold me.
Don Salluste. Great the pleasure 'tis to see
A beggar!
Don Cæsar. [*Bowing.*] I delighted am——
Don Salluste. We know
Your doings, sir.
Don Cæsar. [*Graciously.*] Which you approve?
Don Salluste. Oh, yes,
They're mighty meritorious. Don Charles
De Mira but the other night was robbed.
They took from him his sword with scabbard chased,
And shoulder belt. As 'twas near Easter Eve,
And he a knight of blessed St. James, the band
Let him retain his cloak.
Don Cæsar. Just Heaven, why?
Don Salluste. Because upon it was embroidered plain
The order. Well, what say you to all this?
Don Cæsar. The devil! I but say we live in times
Most dreadful. Oh, what will become of us
If thieves pay court to good St. James, and count
Him of themselves?
Don Salluste. You were with them?
Don Cæsar. Well, yes;
If I must speak, I was. But your Don Charles
I did not touch. I only gave advice.

Don Salluste. Worse still. Last night, just when the moon had set,
A crowd of low riffraff—all sorts of men,
Shoeless and ragged, rushed out from their dens
Pell-mell unto the Mayor Square, and then
Attacked the guard. There you were.
Don Cæsar. Cousin, yes,
'Tis true. But always I disdain to fight
The mere thief-catchers. There I was—that's all;
For during all the row, I walked apart
Beneath th' Arcade, verse making. Ah, they knocked
Each other about finely.
Don Salluste. That's not all.
Don Cæsar. Well, what is it?
Don Salluste. 'Mong other things, in France
They say that you, with rebels like yourself,
Did force the lock of the strong money box
Of the Excise.
Don Cæsar. Oh, I deny it not;
France is the country of an enemy.
Don Salluste. Again, in Flanders, meeting with Don Paul
Barthélemy, who then had just received
The product of a vineyard he was charged
To carry to Mons' noble Chapter, you
Laid hands upon it, though the gold belonged
E'en to the clergy.
Don Cæsar. In Flanders, was it?
It might be so, for I have travelled much.
And is that all?
Don Salluste. The sweat of shame, Don Cæsar,
To my forehead mounts whene'er I think of you.
Don Cæsar. Well, let it mount.
Don Salluste. Our family——
Don Cæsar. No, stay;
For only unto you in all Madrid
My real name is known. So do not speak
Of family.
Don Salluste. Only the other day,
A marchioness, when leaving church, spoke thus:

"Who is that brigand there below, who struts
With nose turned up, and eyes upon the watch,
Squaring himself with arms a-kimbo set?
More tattered far than Job, and prouder he
Than a Braganza—covering his rags
With arrogance—handling his big sword-hilt
Beneath his sleeve, that's all in slits, the while
The blade about his heels hangs as he steps
With masterful air, his cloak in dented gaps
Resembling saws, his stockings all awry."

Don Cæsar. [*Glancing at his own attire.*] And then, of course,
you promptly answered her,
It is dear Zafari!

Don Salluste. No, sir, I blushed.

Don Cæsar. Ah, well, the lady had her laugh. I like
To make a woman laugh.

Don Salluste. Your comrades are
Swashbucklers infamous.

Don Cæsar. Mere learners they—
Scholars—each one as gentle as a sheep.

Don Salluste. You everywhere are seen with women vile.

Don Cæsar. O Love's bright radiance! O sweet Isabels!
What fine things now one hears of you! A shame
It is to treat you thus—beauties with sly
And laughing eyes, to whom I tell at night
The sonnets I have made at morn.

Don Salluste. In short,
The friend you are of Matalobos, that
Galician thief who desolates Madrid,
Defying our police.

Don Cæsar. If you will deign,
I beg you let us reason. Without him
Barebacked I should have been—that would have looked
Unseemly. Seeing me without a coat,
Though it was winter time, he felt for me.—
That amber-perfumed fop, the Count of Albe,
Was robbed but lately of his doublet fine,
His silken one——

Don Salluste. Well?

Don Cæsar. I it is who have it,
Matalobos gave it me.
Don Salluste. The Count's pelisse!
And you are not ashamed?
Don Cæsar. I'm n'er ashamed
Of wearing a good coat, 'broidered, gallooned,
That keeps me warm in winter—makes me smart
In summer time. Look, here it is, quite new.
[*He half opens his cloak, and shows a superb doublet of rose-coloured satin embroidered in gold.*
By scores, love-letters written to the Count
Are crammed i' the pockets. Oft, when poor, love-sick,
With naught to eat, a steaming vent hole I
Discover, from the which comes up the smell
Of cooking, cheating then by turns my heart
And stomach, I can sit me down to read
The Count's sweet letters, revelling there alike
I' the scent of feasting, and a dream of love.
Don Salluste. Don Cæsar——
Don Cæsar. Cousin, now a truce, I beg,
Unto reproaches. A grandee I am,
And of your kindred. Cæsar is my name,
The Count Garofa, but upon my birth
'Twas folly crowned me. Lands and palaces
I had, and well I paid the Célimènes.
Pshaw! Scarcely twenty years I knew before
The whole had vanished, only there remained
Of my good fortune—true or false—a pack
Of creditors to howl about my heels.
Good faith! I took to flight and changed my name.
Now am I but a boon companion found,
Zafari, whom none know by other name
Save you. No money, master, give you me;
I do without. At night, with head upon
The stones, before the ancient palace walls
Of Tevé, there these nine years past I've stopped.
I slumber with the blue sky overhead,
And happy thus. 'Tis a fine fortune, mine!
The world believes me to the Indies gone,

Or to the devil—dead. The fountain near
Supplies my drink, and afterward I walk
With air of glory. My own palace, whence
My money flew, is tenanted to-day
By the Pope's Nuncio, Espinola. Well,
When I by chance am there, I give advice
Unto the Nuncio's workmen—occupied
In sculpturing a Bacchus o'er the door—
But will you lend me just ten crowns?

Don Salluste. Hear me——

Don Cæsar. [*Crossing his arms.*] Now, what is't you would say?

Don Salluste. I sent for you
That I might serve you. I, childless and rich,
And much the elder, see you, Cæsar, now
With sorrow and regret to ruin dragged,
And fain would save you. Bully that you are,
You are unfortunate. I'll pay your debts,
Restore your palace—place you at the court,
And make of you again a lady-killer.
Let then Zafari be extinguished now,
And Cæsar newly born. I wish that you
Henceforth should, at your will, my fortune use
Fearless, and taking with both hands, nor care
For future needs. When we have relatives
We must support them, and be pitiful.

[*While* Don Salluste *is speaking*, Don Cæsar's *countenance takes more and more the expression of astonishment, joyous and hopeful. At last he bursts out.*

Don Cæsar. You always had a devil's wit, and what
You've said just now's most eloquently put.
Go on.

Don Salluste. Yes, Cæsar, I will do all this
On one condition. I'll explain it all
A moment hence. First take my purse.

Don Cæsar. [*Weighing the purse, which is full of gold.*] This is
Magnificent!

Don Salluste. And I intend for you
Five hundred ducats.

Don Cæsar. [*Bewildered.*] Marquis!
Don Salluste. From to-day.
Don Cæsar. By Jove! I'm yours to order. Now then tell
Conditions—name them. On a brave man's faith,
My sword is at your service to command;
Your slave I am, and, if you wish it so,
I'll cross blades with the Don Spavento, who
A captain is that comes from hell.
Don Salluste. No, not
Your sword can I accept, for reasons good.
Don Cæsar. What then? Right little else have I.
Don Salluste. [*Drawing nearer and lowering his voice.*] You know,
And in this case 'tis lucky, all the rogues
About Madrid.
Don Cæsar. You do me honour.
Don Salluste. You
Can always in your train bring all the pack;
You could raise up a tumult if need be.
I know it. All this may be useful now.
Don Cæsar. Upon my word it seems you would invent
An opera. What part am I to take?
Shall I compose the verse, or symphony?
Command, I for a frolic row am good.
Don Salluste. [*Gravely.*] 'Tis to Don Cæsar that I speak, and not
Zafari. [*Lowering his voice more and more.*] List! 'Tis for a stern result
I need that some one should in secret work
And aid me with his skill to bring about
A great event. Not mischievous am I,
But times there are when without any shame
One the most delicate turns up his sleeves
And sets to work. Thou shalt be rich, but thou
Must help me silently to spread a net
As in the night bird-catchers do. A web
That's strong, but hid by shining glass, a snare
Such as is set for lark or girl. The plan,
It must be terrible and wonderful.

I think you are not very scrupulous.—
Avenge me.

Don Cæsar. You avenge!

Don Salluste. Yes, me.

Don Cæsar. On whom?

Don Salluste. A woman.

Don Cæsar. [*Drawing himself up and looking haughtily at* Don Salluste.] Halt! and say no more of this
To me. Now, cousin, on my soul I'll speak
My mind to you. He who can claim the right
A sword to bear, and yet by stealthy means
Takes vengeance basely—on a woman, too—
Who, born patrician, acts the bailiff's part,
Were he grandee of Old Castile, and did
A hundred clarions follow him, and sound
Their din, were he with orders harnessed, were
He marquis, viscount, or the lineal heir
Of blameless, noble sire—for me he'd be
Only a scoundrel of the deepest dye,
Whom for such villainy I'd gladly see
Upon the gallows, hanging by four nails!

Don Salluste. Cæsar!——

Don Cæsar. Add not a word, outrageous 'tis.
[*He throws the purse at the feet of* Don Salluste.
There—keep your secret and your money, too.
Ah, I can comprehend a theft, a stroke
That's murderous, or in darkness of the night
The forcing prison doors—hatchet in hand,
And with a hundred desperate buccaneers,
With howl and thrust, to slaughter jailers there,
Claiming, we bandits, for an eye an eye,
And tooth for tooth—men against men. That's well.
But stealthily a woman to destroy,
And dig a trap beneath her feet—perchance
Abuse her, for who knows what chance may be?—
To take this poor bird in some hideous snare—
Oh, rather than accomplish such dishonour,
And be at such a price, my noble lord,
So rich and great—I say before my God,

Who sees my soul, much sooner would I choose—
Than reach such odious infamy—that dogs
Should gnaw my bones beneath the pillory.

Don Salluste. Cousin——

Don Cæsar. Your benefits I shall not need,
So long as I shall find in my free life
Fountains of water—in the fields fresh air,
And in the town a thief who me provides
With winter raiment; in my soul shall be
Forgetfulness of past prosperity,
When, sir, before your palace's great doors,
At noon I lay me down, my head in shade
And feet in sunshine, without thought for what
May be on waking. So adieu !—'tis God
Can judge between us. Now, Don Salluste, you
I leave with people of the court, who are
Of your own sort; I with the scamps will stay.
I herd with wolves, but not with serpents.

Don Salluste. Hold
An instant——

Don Cæsar. Now, my master, cease. Let us
Cut short this visit; if 'twas meant to trap
And send me off to prison—do it quick.

Don Salluste. I thought you, Cæsar, much more hardened. Ah,
My trial of you has succeeded well.
I now am satisfied. Your hand, I pray.

Don Cæsar. How—what?

Don Salluste. 'Twas but in jest I spoke to you.
All that I said just now was but a test,
And nothing more.

Don Cæsar. You've set me dreaming, though,
About a woman, vengeance, and a plot——

Don Salluste. A trap—imagination, that was all.

Don Cæsar. Ah, well and good !—But how about my debts?
Is paying them imagination, too?
And the five hundred ducats promised me?

Don Salluste. I'm going now to fetch them.

[*He goes toward the door at the back, and makes a sign to* RUY BLAS *to come in.*

Don Cæsar. [*Aside, at the front, and looking across to* Don Salluste.] Hum! The face
A traitor's is. And when the mouth says yes,
The look implies, perhaps.

Don Salluste. [*To* Ruy Blas.] Ruy Blas, stay here.
[*To* Don Cæsar.] I'm coming back.

[*Exit by little door at left. As soon as he is gone,* Don Cæsar *and* Ruy Blas *approach each other eagerly.*

SCENE III

Don Cæsar, Ruy Blas

Don Cæsar. No, I was not deceived;
Upon my faith, 'tis thou, Ruy Blas!

Ruy Blas. 'Tis thou,
Zafari! But how comest thou within
The palace?

Don Cæsar. Oh, by chance. But soon I take
Myself away. I am a bird, and like
Free space. But thou? this livery? is it worn
For a disguise?

Ruy Blas. [*Bitterly.*] No, I'm disguised when I
Am otherwise.

Don Cæsar. What is it that you say?

Ruy Blas. Give me thy hand to press again, as in
The happy time of joy and wretchedness.
When without home I lived, hungry by day
And cold at night, when I at least was free!
Then when thou knew'st me, I was still a man;
Born of the people both of us—alas!
It was life's morn!—So much alike we were
That many thought us brothers, and from dawn
Of day we carolled—and at night we slept
Before our God, our Father and our Host,
Beneath starred heaven sleeping side by side.
Yes, we shared all things—but at last there came
The day—the mournful hour when we were forced
To go our different ways, but now unchanged,
After four years I find thee still the same;

As joyous as a child, and free as are
The gipsy folk. Always Zafari, rich
Though poor, who never had, and never aught
Desired! But as for me, what change! What can
I say, my brother? Orphan boy, brought up
From charity at college! nursed in pride
And science, it but proved a mournful boon.
Instead of skilful workman I was made
A dreamer. Thou hast known me well. My thoughts
And aspirations lifted I to Heaven
In strophes wild. Against thy railing laugh
I brought a hundred answers. Knowing then
That strange ambition fired my soul, what need
Had I to work? But toward an end unseen
I moved; I thought dreams true and possible,
And hoped all things from Fate.—And since I am
Of those who pass long, idle days in thought
Before some palace gorged with wealth—and watch
The duchesses go in and out—one day,
When torn by hunger in the street, I picked
Up bread where I could find it; brother, 'twas
By ignominious sluggishness. Oh, when
I was but twenty, full of confidence
In my own powers, I barefoot walked, but lost
In meditations on humanity;
I built up many plans, a mountain made
Of projects. Pitying the ills of Spain
I thought, poor soul, that by the world myself
Was needed. Friend, the issue see—behold!
I am a lackey!

Don Cæsar. Yes, I know full well
That want is a low door, which, when we must
By stern necessity pass through, doth force
The greatest to bend down the most. But Fate
Has ever ebb and flow. So hope, I say.

Ruy Blas. [*Shaking his head.*] My master is the Marquis of Finlas.

Don Cæsar. I know him. Is it, then, that you reside
Within this palace?

Ruy Blas. No! until to-day,
Just now, I never have the threshold crossed.
Don Cæsar. Ah, is it so? Your master from his place,
His duties, must live here himself?
Ruy Blas. Oh, yes,
The court may want him any hour. But he
A little secret dwelling has—where perhaps
In daylight he has never yet been seen.
An unobtrusive house, a hundred steps
Beyond the palace; brother, there I live;
And by the secret door, of which alone
He has the key, sometimes at night he comes
Followed by men whom he lets in. These men
Are masked and speak in whispering tones. They are
Shut in together, and none ever knows
What passes then. Of two black mutes I am
The master and companion. But my name
They know not.
Don Cæsar. Yes, 'tis there that he receives
His spies, as chief of the Alcaids. 'Tis there
He plans his many snares. Subtle is he,
And holds all in his hand.
Ruy Blas. 'Twas yesterday
He said: "You must be at the palace ere
The dawn; and enter by the golden grill."
I came, and then he made me don this suit,
This odious livery which you see me in,
And which to-day I for the first time wear.
Don Cæsar. Still hope!
Ruy Blas. I hope! But you know nothing yet.
To breathe 'neath this degrading garb, to lose
The joy and pride of life—all this is naught.
To be a slave and vile, what matters that?
But listen, brother, well. I do not feel
This servile dress, for at my heart there dwells
A hydra, with the fangs of flame, that binds
Me in its fiery folds. If the outside
Has shocked you—what would be could you but look
Within?

Don Cæsar. What can you mean?
Ruy Blas. Invent—suppose—
Imagine—search your mind for all strange things
Unheard of, mad, and horrible—a fate
Bewildering! Yes, compose a deadly draught,
And dig a pit more black than crime, more dull
Than folly, still my secret thou wilt not
Approach. Thou canst not guess it! Ah! who could,
Zafari? In the gulf where destiny
Has plunged me—plunge thine eyes! I love the Queen!
Don Cæsar. Good Heavens!
Ruy Blas. Beneath a splendid canopy,
Adorned at top with the imperial globe
There is in Aranjuez, or may be
In the Escurial—or sometimes here—
A man that scarce is looked on from below,
Or named, except with dread—before whose eyes
We all of equal meanness seem, as if
That he were God. A man that men gaze on
With trembling, serving him on bended knee.
To in his presence stand with covered head
Is token of high honour. If he willed
Our heads should fall, a sign would be enough.
His every whim is an event. He lives
Alone—superb—incased in majesty,
So bulwarked and profound, its weight is felt
Through half the world. Well, now thou understand'st
That I the lackey—ah, yes, even I
Am jealous of that man—yes, of the King!
Don Cæsar. You jealous of the King!
Ruy Blas. Undoubtedly,
Because I love his wife!
Don Cæsar. Unhappy one!
Ruy Blas. Listen: each day I watch to see her pass,
And like a madman am. And oh, the life
Of this poor thing is one long weariness.
Each night I dream of her. Oh, think what 'tis
For her to live in this dull court of hate,
And base hypocrisies—married to one

Who in the chase spends all his time! A king—
A fool—an imbecile! at thirty years
Already old—and less than man—unfit
Alike to live or reign. And of a race
That's dying off. His father could not hold
A parchment, so debilitated he!
What misery for her, so young and fair,
Thus to be wedded to the second Charles!
Unto the sisters of the Rosary
She goes each eve—thou know'st it—traversing
The Ortaleza street—I can not tell
How 'twas this madness grew within my heart,
But judge! She loves a little azure flower
Of Germany—I go each day a league
To Caramanchel, where alone I find
It grows. I have sought for it everywhere.
I pluck the finest, and a posy make.
Oh, but I tell you now these foolish things!—
At midnight like a thief I scale the wall
Around the royal park, and place the flowers
Upon her favourite bench. Even last night
I dared to put a letter 'mid the flowers—
Truly a letter! Brother, pity me!
At night to reach this bank I have to mount
The wall where bristle iron spikes. I know
Some time that I shall leave my flesh thereon.
Now will she find my flowers—my letter too?
I know not—but you see how mad I am.

Don Cæsar. It is the devil! Now take care—thy game
Is dang'rous. There's the Count Oñate, he loves
Her also, and keeps guard as chamberlain
As well as lover. On some night a trooper
Unpitying might despatch you with one blow,
Before your flowers were faded nailing them
Unto your heart. Oh, th' idea, I say,
Is quite preposterous—loving thus the Queen!
And why? It is a devil's scrape you're in.

Ruy Blas. [*With energy.*] Do I not know it? I myself! My soul

Is given over, I would sell it might
I thus become like one of those young lords
That from this window I behold—who are
A live offence, entering with plumèd hats
And haughty brows. Yes, if I could but break
My chain, and could, as they, approach the Queen
In garments not degrading. But—oh! rage,
Thus to appear to her, and unto them!
To be for her a lackey! pity me,
O God! [*Approaching* DON CÆSAR.
But I must recollect myself.
Ask'st thou not when and why I loved her thus?
One day—but what's the good of this? 'Tis true
My desperate madness I've made known to thee
And all my thousand tortures made you share,
In showing you my agony—but ask
Not how—or wherefore! only I love her—
Insanely love her, that is all.

Don Cæsar. There, now,
Don't fret.

Ruy Blas. [*Pale, and overcome, falling into the arm-chair*].
No—no—I suffer—pardon me,
Or rather fly from me, my brother. Go,
And leave the wretched madman who but knows
With horror that beneath the lackey's coat
There rage the passions of a king!

Don Cæsar. [*Laying his hand on the shoulder of* RUY BLAS.]
Leave thee!
What, I! who have not suffered thus because
I have not loved. Like a poor bell am I
Without a clapper—beggar who e'en begs
For love he knows not where. To whom from time
To time Fate throws some paltry coin. With heart
Extinguished—drawn within itself, as from
The tattered playbill of the yesternight.
Seest thou that for this all-absorbing love
I envy quite as much as pity thee!
O, Ruy Blas!

[*A moment of silence, while with clasped hands they look at each other sorrowfully, but with confiding friendship.*

[*Enter* Don Salluste. *He advances softly, looking at* Don Cæsar *and* Ruy Blas *with profound attention, they not perceiving him. In one hand he holds a hat and a sword, which on entering he places on an arm-chair, and in the other a purse which he lays on the table.*

Don Salluste. [*To* Don Cæsar.] Here is the money.

[*At the voice of* Don Salluste, Ruy Blas, *suddenly aroused, starts up, and with eyes looking down, assumes an attitude of respect.*

Don Cæsar. [*Aside, and looking sideways at* Don Salluste.] Ah,
The devil has me! At the door no doubt
The artful one has listened. After all,
What matter?—Pshaw! [*Aloud to* Don Salluste.] Don Salluste, thanks.

[*He opens the purse—spreads the money on the table, handling the ducats delightedly. Then he arranges them in two piles on the velvet cover. While he is counting them,* Don Salluste *goes to the back, looking behind him to be sure that* Don Cæsar *is not observing him. He opens the little door at the right. At a sign from him three* Alguazils, *armed with swords and dressed in black, appear.* Don Salluste *points out* Don Cæsar *to them in a mysterious manner.* Ruy Blas *stands upright and motionless as a statue by the table, neither seeing nor hearing anything.*

Don Salluste. [*In a low tone to the* Alguazils.] You see
That man who counts the money—follow him
When he goes hence, and seize him silently,
And without violence. And then embark
By shortest way to Denia. [*He gives them a sealed parchment.*
Here is writ
The order by my hand. And afterward,
Without attending to his statements, all
Chimerical, you'll sell him on the sea
To corsairs there will be from Africa;
A thousand piastres for you—but be quick.

[*The three* Alguazils *bow and exeunt.*

Don Cæsar. [*Finishing the arrangement of his ducats.*] Surely
there's nothing more amusing than
To equally divide the crowns that are
One's own. [*He makes two equal piles, and turns to* RUY BLAS.
Here, brother, is thy share.
Ruy Blas. How—what!
Don Cæsar. [*Pointing to one of the heaps of gold.*] Come—
take, be free!
Don Salluste. [*Aside, looking at them from the back.*] The devil!
Ruy Blas. [*Shaking his head in sign of refusal.*] No—the heart
It is that has to be delivered. No,
My lot is here. I must remain.
Don Cæsar. Well—well
Have thine own way. Art thou the crazy one?
And am I wise? God knows.
[*He gathers the money into the bag and puts it in his pocket.*
Don Salluste. [*From the back, watching them.*] How near alike
They are in mien and face!
Don Cæsar. [*To* RUY BLAS.] Adieu!
Ruy Blas. Thy hand!
[*They press hands. Exit* DON CÆSAR *without noticing* DON SALLUSTE, *who has kept himself apart.*

SCENE IV

RUY BLAS, DON SALLUSTE

Don Salluste. Ruy Blas!
Ruy Blas. [*Turning quickly.*] My lord?
Don Salluste. I am not confident
Whether 'twas fully daylight when you came
This morning—tell me.
Ruy Blas. Excellency, no,
Not quite. I gave your pass without a word
To the doorkeeper, then came up.
Don Salluste. Wore you
A cloak?
Ruy Blas. I did, my lord.
Don Salluste. In that case then

None in the castle yet has seen on you
This livery?

Ruy Blas. No person of Madrid.

Don Salluste. [*Pointing to the door by which* Don Cæsar *had gone out.*] That's well. Go, close the door. Take off this coat.

[Ruy Blas *takes off his livery-coat and throws it on a chair.*

I think your writing's good. Write now for me.

[*He makes a sign to* Ruy Blas *to seat himself at the table where there are writing materials.* Ruy Blas *obeys.*

My secretary you must be to-day,
And first a love-letter must write; you see
I nothing hide from you—my queen of love
Is Doña Praxedis—a witch that's come,
I think, from paradise. There—I'll dictate:
"A danger terrible environs me;
My queen alone can stay the tempest's force
By coming to my house this night. If not,
I'm lost. My life, my heart, my reason now
I lay before the feet I kiss." [*He laughs, interrupting himself.*
Danger,
A turn well put to draw her on. I am
Expert. Women like much to save just those
Who fool them most. Add now: "Come to the door
That's at the end of the avenue—at night
You'll not be recognised. And one who is
Devoted will be there to ope the door."
'Tis perfect, on my word.—Sign now.

Ruy Blas. Your name,
My lord?

Don Salluste. Not so—sign Cæsar. 'Tis the name
In such adventures I adopt.

Ruy Blas. [*After having obeyed.*] Unknown
Will be the writing to the lady?

Don Salluste. Pshaw!
The seal will be enough. Oft thus I write.
I go away at nightfall, Ruy Blas,
And leave you here. I'm planning for you as
A friend sincere. Your state shall change, but then

You must obey me in all things. In you
I've found a servant faithful and discreet.

Ruy Blas. [*Bowing.*] My lord!

Don Salluste. To better your condition here
I wish.

Ruy Blas. [*Showing the letter he has just written.*] How should the letter be addressed?

Don Salluste. I will attend to that.

[*Approaching* RUY BLAS *in a significant manner.*
I wish your good.

[*Silence for a few moments. Then he makes a sign for* RUY BLAS *to seat himself again at the table.*

Write thus: "I, Ruy Blas, the serving man
Of the most noble lord the Marquis of
Finlas, engage to serve him faithfully
On all occasions as a servant true
In public or in secrecy." [RUY BLAS *obeys.*
Now sign
Your name. The date. That's well. Give it to me.

[*He folds and puts into his portfolio the letter and the paper which* RUY BLAS *has just written.*

Just now they brought me in a sword.—Ah! there
It is upon the chair.

[*He looks toward the arm-chair on which he had placed the sword and hat—goes to it and takes up the sword.*
The tie's of silk,
Painted and 'broidered in the newest style—
[*He makes* RUY BLAS *admire it.*
Take it. What say you to this foil, Ruy Blas?
The hilt is workmanship of Gil the famed
Engraver, he who chisels out a box
For sweetmeats in a sword's hilt, to amuse
The pretty girls.

[*He passes the scarf to which the sword is attached over the shoulders of* RUY BLAS.
Now put it on—I want
To see the effect on you. I do declare
You look a noble every inch. [*Listening.*
They come—

Ah, yes, 'tis almost time the Queen were here—
The Marquis Basto!——

[*The door at the end of the corridor opens.* Don Salluste *unfastens his cloak and hastily throws it over the shoulders of* Ruy Blas *just at the moment when the* Marquis del Basto *appears; then he goes up to the* Marquis, *drawing after him* Ruy Blas *in a stupefied state.*

SCENE V

Don Salluste, Ruy Blas, Don Pamfilo d'Avalos, Marquis del Basto—*afterward the* Marquis de Santa-Cruz, *then the* Count d'Albe *and all the Court.*

Don Salluste. [*To the* Marquis del Basto.] Let me to your Grace
Present my cousin—the Don Cæsar—Count
Of Garofa, near to Velalcazar.

Ruy Blas. [*Aside.*] Oh, Heavens!

Don Salluste. [*Aside to* Ruy Blas.] Silence!

Marquis del Basto. [*To* Ruy Blas.] Sir, I am charmed——

[*He puts out his hand, which* Ruy Blas *takes in a confused manner.*

Don Salluste. [*In a whisper to* Ruy Blas.] Let be—
Salute him. [Ruy Blas *bows to the* Marquis.

Marquis del Basto. [*To* Ruy Blas.] Ah, I loved your mother much. [*Aside to* Don Salluste.
How changed! I scarcely would have known him.

Don Salluste. [*Speaking low to the* Marquis.] Ah!
Ten years away!

Marquis del Basto. [*In the same manner.*] Indeed!

Don Salluste. [*Slapping* Ruy Blas *on the shoulder.*] At last come back!
You recollect the prodigal he was?
And how he squandered the pistoles? Each night
A dance or fête—a hundred instruments
Of music on Apollo's fish-pond raged.
Concerts and masquerades, and wildest pranks
Dazzled Madrid with sudden scenes. Ruined

In just three years! Truly a lion he.—
He came from India in the galleon.

Ruy Blas. [*Confused.*] My lord——

Don Salluste. [*Gaily.*] Oh, call me cousin—such we are.
We, the Bazans, are an old family,
Our ancestor was Iniguez d'Iviza;
His grandson, Pedro de Bazan, was wed
To Marianne de Gor. Their son was Jean;
Under King Philip he was admiral.
Jean had two sons, who on our ancient tree
Grafted two stocks for blazonry: I am
The Marquis of Finlas, and you the Count
Of Garofa, each equal in degree.
And by the women, Cæsar, 'tis the same.
'Tis Aragon you claim, I Portugal.
Your branch as lofty is as ours. I am
The fruit of one, and of the other you
The offspring are.

Ruy Blas. [*Aside.*] Where is he dragging me?

[*While* DON SALLUSTE *was speaking, the* MARQUIS DE SANTA-CRUZ, DON ALVAR DE BAZAN Y BENAVIDES, *an old man with a white mustache and a thick wig was approaching them.*

Marquis de Santa-Cruz. [*To* DON SALLUSTE.] You make it clear. If he your cousin is,
Mine is he too.

Don Salluste. True, Marquis—for we come
Of the same stock.

[*He presents* RUY BLAS *to the* MARQUIS DE SANTA-CRUZ.
Don Cæsar.

Marquis de Santa-Cruz. I opine
It is not he whom we thought dead?

Don Salluste. It is.

Marquis de Santa-Cruz. He has come back then?

Don Salluste. From the Indies.

Marquis de Santa-Cruz. [*Looking at* RUY BLAS.] Ah, Indeed!

Don Salluste. You then remember him?

Marquis de Santa-Cruz. By Heavens,

I recollect his birth!

Don Salluste. [*Aside to* Ruy Blas.] Half blind he is—
The good man will not own it. 'Tis to prove
His eyes are good he recognises you.

Marquis de Santa-Cruz. [*Extending his hand to* Ruy Blas.]
Your hand, my cousin.

Ruy Blas. [*Bowing.*] My lord——

Marquis de Santa-Cruz. [*In a low tone to* Don Salluste, *and pointing to* Ruy Blas.] He could not look
Better. [*To* Ruy Blas.] Charmed again to see you.

Don Salluste. [*In a low tone and taking the* Marquis *aside.*]
His debts
I mean to pay. I think that you can serve him,
In your position, if some place at court
Should vacant be—about the King or Queen——

Marquis de Santa-Cruz. [*In a low tone.*] A charming youth he is; I will not fail
To think of it; for he a kinsman is.

Don Salluste. At the Castilian council board I know
You're powerful. I recommend him to you.

[*He quits the* Marquis de Santa-Cruz, *and goes to other nobles to whom he presents* Ruy Blas. *Among them is the* Count d'Albe *very superbly dressed;* Don Salluste *introduces* Ruy Blas *to him.*

My cousin, Cæsar, Count of Garofa,
Near to Velalcazar.

[*The nobles gravely exchange bows with* Ruy Blas, *who is abashed.* Don Salluste *to the* Count de Ribagorza.

You missed last night
The Atalanta ballet? Lindamire
Did dance divinely.

[*He goes into ecstasies at the doublet of the* Count d'Albe.

Count, this is splendid!

Count d'Albe. Ah, I had one was richer—rose-coloured
Satin with golden braid. Matalobos
Stole it.

An Usher of the Court. [*From the back.*] The Queen is coming. Gentlemen,

Arrange yourselves.

[*The large curtains at the glazed side of the corridor open. The nobles fall into line near the door. The guards line a passage.* RUY BLAS, *breathless and beside himself, comes to the front as if to take refuge there.* DON SALLUSTE *follows him.*

Don Salluste. [*In a low voice to* RUY BLAS.] Are you not 'shamed that with
Expanding fortunes, thus your heart should shrink?
Awake. I quit Madrid. My little house
Near to the bridge, where you reside, I leave
For you to use, nothing reserving save
The secret keys. I leave the mutes with you.
Some other orders you will soon receive.
Obey, and I will make your fortune. Rise,
Fear nothing, for the time is opportune.
The court's a territory where one moves
With little light. Walk you with bandaged eyes.
I'll see for you, my man!

Usher. [*In a loud voice.*] The Queen!

Ruy Blas. Queen! oh!

[*The* QUEEN *appears magnificently attired and surrounded by ladies and pages, and under a canopy of scarlet velvet supported by four gentlemen of the chamber bareheaded.* RUY BLAS, *bewildered, gazes as if absorbed by this resplendent vision. All the* Grandees *of Spain cover, the* MARQUIS DEL BASTO, *the* COUNT D'ALBE, *the* MARQUIS DE SANTA-CRUZ, DON SALLUSTE. DON SALLUSTE *moves rapidly to the arm-chair, takes from it the hat, which he carries to* RUY BLAS *and puts on his head.*

Don Salluste. What giddiness has seized you? Cover now, Cæsar; you are grandee of Spain.

Ruy Blas. [*Absent, low to* DON SALLUSTE.] And next, My lord, what is't you order me to do?

Don Salluste. [*Indicating the* QUEEN, *who is slowly passing along the corridor.*] To please that woman, and her lover be.

ACT II—THE QUEEN OF SPAIN

SCENE I.—A SALOON NEXT TO THE QUEEN'S BEDCHAMBER. AT THE LEFT A LITTLE DOOR OPENING INTO THAT ROOM. AT THE RIGHT, IN AN ANGLE OF THE WALL, ANOTHER DOOR OPENING TO THE EXTERNAL APARTMENTS. AT THE BACK LARGE OPEN WINDOWS. IT IS THE AFTERNOON OF A FINE DAY IN SUMMER. THE FACE OF A SAINT RICHLY ENSHRINED IS AGAINST THE WALL; BENEATH IT IS READ, "HOLY MARY IN SLAVERY." ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE IS A MADONNA, BEFORE WHICH A GOLDEN LAMP IS BURNING. NEAR TO THE MADONNA IS A FULL-LENGTH PORTRAIT OF CHARLES II AT THE RISING OF THE CURTAIN THE QUEEN DOÑA MARIA OF NEUBOURG IS IN ONE CORNER SEATED BESIDE ONE OF HER LADIES, A YOUNG AND PRETTY GIRL. THE QUEEN IS IN A WHITE DRESS OF CLOTH OF SILVER SHE IS EMBROIDERING, BUT INTERRUPTS HERSELF FROM TIME TO TIME TO CHAT. IN THE OPPOSITE CORNER IS SEATED, IN A HIGH-BACKED CHAIR, THE DOÑA JUANA DE LA CUEVA, DUCHESS D'ALBUQUERQUE, FIRST LADY OF THE CHAMBER, WITH TAPESTRY IN HER HAND, AN OLD WOMAN IN BLACK. NEAR TO THE DUCHESS A TABLE WHERE SEVERAL LADIES ARE ENGAGED IN FEMININE WORK. AT THE BACK STANDS DON GURITAN COUNT D'OÑATE, THE CHAMBERLAIN, A TALL, THIN MAN OF ABOUT FIFTY-FIVE YEARS OF AGE, WITH GRAY MUSTACHE, LOOKING THE OLD SOLDIER THOUGH DRESSED WITH EXAGGERATED ELEGANCE, WEARING RIBBONS DOWN TO HIS SHOES

The QUEEN, *the* DUCHESS D'ALBUQUERQUE, DON GURITAN, CASILDA, DUENNAS

THE QUEEN. He's gone, however! And I ought to be
At ease. Ah well, I am not, though! this man,
The Marquis of Finlas, weighs on my soul,
He hates me so!

Casilda. According to your wish
Is he not exiled?

The Queen. That man hates me.

Casilda. Oh,
Your Majesty——

The Queen. 'Tis true, Casilda. Strange
This man for me is like an angel bad.
One day—'twas on the morrow he must leave—
He came as usual to kiss hands. The rest,
All the grandees, approached the throne in file;
I gave my hand—was sorrowful, and still,
Observing vaguely in the hall's dim light
A battle picture painted on the wall,
When, suddenly it was, my eyes looked down
Near to the table and perceived this man,
So dreaded, was advancing unto me.
Soon as I saw him nothing more I saw.
Slowly he moved, and fingered all the while
His poniard's sheath, so that at times the blade
I saw. Grave was he, yet he dazzled me
With looks of flame. Sudden he bent, and like
A creeping thing—and then upon my hand
I felt his serpent-mouth!

Casilda. He rendered you
His homage; do not we the same?

The Queen. His lips
Were not like other lips. 'Twas the last time
I saw him. Often since I've thought of him.
'Tis true that I have other troubles, yet
I tell myself that hell is in that soul!
Only a woman am I to that man.
In dreams of night I meet again this fiend,
And feel his frightful kiss upon my hand;
I see his eyes shine out with hatred's glare;
And as a deadly poison runs from vein
To vein, so e'en within my freezing heart
I feel the shudder of that icy kiss!
What sayest thou to this?

Casilda. Madam, they are
But phantoms!

The Queen. Ah, indeed—sorrows I know
That are more real. [*Aside.*] Oh, but I must hide
That which torments me. [*To* CASILDA.] Those poor mendi-
cants

Who dare not to approach—tell me——

Casilda. [*Going to the window.*] Madam,
I know. They still are in the square.

The Queen. Here then,
Throw them my purse.

[Casilda *takes the purse and throws it from the window.*

Casilda. Oh, madam, you who give
Your alms so sweetly,

[*Pointing to* Don Guritan, *who, standing erect and silent at the back of the stage, looks at the* Queen *with an expression of mute adoration.*

Will you nothing throw
In pity to the Count Oñate—a word,
Only a word? A brave old man is he,
With love beneath his armour, and a heart
More soft than hard the rind!

The Queen. So tiresome he!

Casilda. I know it. Yet I pray you speak to him.

The Queen. [*Turning toward* Don Guritan.] Good-day unto you, Count.

[Don Guritan, *making three bows, approaches the* Queen, *sighing, to kiss her hand, which with an indifferent and absent manner she allows him to do. Afterward he returns to his place beside the chair of the* Duchess.

Don Guritan. [*In retiring to* Casilda.] How charming is
The Queen to-day!

Casilda. [*Looking at him retreating.*] Oh, the poor heron! near
The stream that tempts, he stays. After a day
Of quiet waiting, he but snatches up
A "Good-day" or "Good-night," often a dry
Cold word, and goes away delighted with
This little morsel in his beak.

The Queen. [*With a sorrowful smile.*] Be still!

Casilda. He only needs for happiness to see
The Queen. To see you means delight for him!

[*Looking with ecstasy at a box on a round table.*

Oh, what a lovely box!

The Queen. I have the key.

Casilda. This box of calambac is exquisite.

The Queen. [*Giving her the key.*] Now open it and see. I've had it filled,
My dear, with relics, and 'tis my intent
To send it on to Neubourg—well I know
My father will be greatly pleased with it.
[*She muses for a moment; then suddenly forces herself out of her reverie.*
I will not think! That which is in my mind
I wish to drive from it. [*To* CASILDA.] Go to my room
And fetch me thence a book— What foolishness!
I don't possess a German book! they all
Are Spanish! And the King is at the chase;
Always away. What weariness! Near him,
In six months, I have only passed twelve days.
Casilda. Who'd wed a king if she must live this way!
[*The* QUEEN *again falls into reverie, and again rouses herself by a violent effort.*
The Queen. I wish to go out now.
[*At these words, pronounced imperiously by the* QUEEN, *the* DUCHESS D'ALBUQUERQUE, *who till this moment had remained motionless in her chair, lifts up her head, then rising, makes a low courtesy to the* QUEEN.
Duchess d'Albuquerque. [*In a hard, curt manner.*] It needs before
The Queen goes out—it is the rule—that all
The doors should opened be by some grandee
Of Spain who has the right to bear the keys;
Now at this hour not one of them remains
Within the palace.
The Queen. Then you shut me up!
Duchess, in short, they wish that I should die!
The Duchess. [*With another courtesy.*] I am duenna of the chamber, so
I must fulfil my duty. [*Reseats herself.*
The Queen. [*Lifting her hands to her head despairingly, aside.*] Well, then, now
To dream again! But no!—[*Aloud.*] Ladies, be quick!
A table—let us play at lansquenet!

The Duchess. [*To the ladies.*] Ladies, stir not. [*Rising and courtesying to the* Queen.] Your Majesty can not,
According to the ancient law, play cards,
Except with kings or with their relatives.

The Queen. [*With an air of command.*] Well, then, go bring to me these relatives.

Casilda. [*Looking at the* Duchess.] Oh, this duenna!

The Duchess. [*Making the sign of the cross.*] To the King who reigns
God has not given, madam, any kin.
The Queen his mother's dead. He's now alone.

The Queen. Let them, then, serve me a collation.

Casilda. Yes,
That were amusing.

The Queen. I invite you now
To it, Casilda.

Casilda. [*Aside, looking at the* Duchess.] Oh, you proper—prim
Old grandmother!

The Duchess. [*Making a reverence.*] When absent is the King,
The Queen eats quite alone. [*Reseats herself.*

The Queen. [*Her patience at an end.*] O God! what is't
That I can do? Not take fresh air, nor play
A game, nor even eat at mine own will!
Most truly I've been dying all the year
That I've been Queen!

Casilda. [*Aside, looking at her with compassion.*] Oh, the poor woman! thus
To pass her days in weariness in this
Insipid court! with no distraction, save
To see at border of this sleepy swamp
[*Looking at* Don Guritan.
An old but love-sick count, that stands upon
One leg to dream!

The Queen. [*To* Casilda.] Think now of something; say,
What shall we do?

Casilda. Ah, hold! The King away,
'Tis you who rule. Just for amusement's sake,
Summon the ministers.

The Queen. [*Shrugging her shoulders.*] A pleasure that!
To see eight gloomy countenances ranged
For talk with me concerning France, and its
Declining King, of Rome—they'd also tell
About the portrait of the archduke which
They bear about at Burgos, 'mid the show
Of cavalcades, beneath a canopy
Of cloth of gold upheld by four Alcaids!
Oh, think of something else!
Casilda. Well, now, 'twould be
Amusing if some youthful equerry
I made come up.
The Queen. Casilda!
Casilda. Oh, I want
So much to look at some young man! Madam,
This venerable court is death to me.
I think that through the eyes old age comes on,
That we, by always looking at the old,
Ourselves age all the sooner.
The Queen. Foolishness!
There comes a time the heart asserts itself.
As it wakes up from sleep, it loses joy. [*Thoughtfully.*
My only happiness—ah! that is in
The corner of the park, where I'm allowed
To go alone.
Casilda. Fine happiness, indeed!
A charming place! where snares are set behind
The marble forms—and where one nothing views;
The walls around are higher than the trees.
The Queen. Oh, how I wish I could go out sometimes!
Casilda. [*In a low voice.*] Go out? Well, madam, listen. Let us, though,
Speak softly. In such a prison's gloomy shade
Naught is there so worth search and finding as
One precious sparkling jewel that is called
The key o' the fields. I have it! And whene'er
You wish, in spite of foes, I'll let you out
At night, and through the town we both can go.
The Queen. Heavens! never! Silence!

Casilda. 'Tis quite easy.

The Queen. Peace!

[*She draws a little away from* Casilda, *and falls into reverie.*

Oh, would that I, who fear the grandees here,
Were still in my good Germany, beside
My parents, as when with my sister dear
I rambled freely through the fields; and when
We met the peasants trailing their rich sheaves,
We talked to them. 'Twas charming. But, alas!
One night a man arrived who said—and he
Was dressed in black, I holding by the hand
My sister, sweet companion—"Madam, you
Are to be Queen of Spain." My father was
All joyous, but my mother wept. Now they
Both weep.—I mean to send in secret soon
This box unto my father; he'll be pleased.
See how everything disheartens me.
My birds from Germany all died.

[Casilda *looks across to the* Duchess, *and makes a sign of wringing the birds' necks.*

And then
They would not let me have the flowers that grew
In mine own country. Never on mine ear
Doth vibrate now a word of love. A Queen
I am to-day. But formerly I knew
What freedom was. Truly thou say'st this park
At eve is dreary—with its walls so high,
One can not see beyond.—Oh, weariness!

[*Singing afar off is heard.*

What is that sound?

Casilda. The laundrywomen, they
Are singing, as they pass the heather through.

[*The singers approach. The words are heard. The* Queen *listens eagerly.*

Song from Outside

Why should we listen
To birds that rejoice?

The bird the most tender
Sings now in thy voice.

Let God show or veil
The stars in the skies,
The purest of stars
Shines now in thine eyes.

Let April renew
All the blossoms around,
The loveliest flower
In thy heart will be found.

The passionate bird song,
The day star above,
And the flower of the soul
But call themselves love!

The Queen. [*Musing.*] Love—love! Ah, they are happy!
And their song,
Their voices, do me harm as well as good.
The Duchess. [*To the ladies.*] These women with their song
annoy the Queen.
Drive them away!
The Queen. [*Eagerly.*] How, madam! scarcely can
I hear them; 'tis my will that they, poor things,
Should pass in peace.
[*To* CASILDA, *pointing to a casement at the back.*
The trees are here less thick,
This window opens to the country; come,
Let us now try to look at them.
[*She goes toward the window with* CASILDA.
The Duchess. [*Rising and courtesying.*] Spain's Queen
Must not look out of window.
The Queen. [*Stopping and retracing her steps.*] Oh, what next!
The lovely sunset filling all the vales,
The golden dust of evening rising o'er
The way, the far-off songs to which all ears
May listen—these for me exist no more.
Unto the world I've said adieu. Not e'en

May I regard the Nature made by God!
E'en others' freedom I may not behold!
The Duchess. [*Making signs to the assistants to leave.*] Go now.
To-day is sacred to the saints,
Th' apostles.
[Casilda *goes toward the door.* *The* Queen *stops her.*
The Queen. What! You leave me?
Casilda. [*Pointing to the* Duchess.] Madam, we
Are ordered out.
The Duchess. [*Courtesying to the ground.*] 'Tis right that we
the Queen
To her devotions leave. [*All go out with profound reverence.*

SCENE II

The Queen. [*Alone.*] To her devotions?
Say rather to her thoughts! How can I flee
Now from them? All have left me, and alone
I am, poor soul, without a torch to light
My dusky way! [*Musing.*] That bleeding hand whose print
Was on the wall! O God, and could it be
That he was hurt? If so it was his fault.
Why would he climb the wall so high? And all
To bring me flowers which they refuse me here;
For such a little thing to venture thus!
Doubtless his wounds were from the iron spikes—
A scrap of lace hung there. A drop of blood
Shed for me claims my tears. [*Losing herself in reverie.*] Each
time I go
Unto the bench, to seek the flowers, I say
To God—whose help forsakes me—that I will
No more return. And yet I still go back.—
But he! Behold three days have passed and he
Has not been there.—And wounded!—Oh, young man,
Unknown, whoever thou may'st be, who thus
Dost see me lonely, and afar from them
Who cherished me, who without recompense,
Or even hope of aught, comes to me thus
'Mid perils never counted—thou who shed'st

Thy blood, and risk'st thy life to give a flower
Unto the Queen of Spain, whoever thou
May'st be—the friend whose shadow follows me—
Since unto law inflexible my heart
Submits, may'st thou be by thy mother loved,
And blessed by me!

[*Energetically, and pressing her hand on her heart.*

But oh, his letter burns!

[*Falling again into reverie.*

And he that other! the implacable
Don Salluste! I by destiny am now
Afflicted and protected too. At once
An angel follows me, and spectre dread!
And without seeing them I feel a stir
Amid the gloom that is perchance about
Moments supreme to bring, in which a man
Who hates me will come near to him who loves.
Shall I by one be from the other saved?
I know not. Oh, my fate seems but the sport
Of two opposing winds. To be a Queen
How weak and poor a thing! Ah, I will pray.

[*She kneels before the Madonna.*

O Blessèd Lady, help me! For mine eyes
I dare not raise to look on you! [*She interrupts herself.*] O God!
The lace, the letter, and the flowers are fire!

[*She puts her hand to her bosom and takes out a crumpled letter, some little dried blue flowers, and a morsel of lace stained with blood, which she throws on the table; then she again kneels.*

O Virgin, thou the star o' the sea! the hope
Of martyrs! help me now! [*Interrupting herself.*] That letter!

[*Turns half round to the table.*

Ah!

'Tis that distracts me. [*She kneels again.*] Not again I'll read
The letter.—Queen of sweet compassion! you
Who wert bestowed on all afflicted souls
For sister! Come, I call you!

[*She rises, advances toward the table, then pauses, but at last grasps the letter as if yielding to an irresistible impulse.*

Yes, I will
Re-read it one last time, and after that
Destroy it. [*With a sad smile.*] For a month, alas! 'tis this
I've said! [*She unfolds the letter resolutely and reads.*

"Madam, in dull obscurity
Beneath your feet, and hidden in the shade,
A man there is who loves you! he the worm
That suffers, loving thus a star; who would
For you give up his soul, if so must be;
And who lies depths below, while you must shine
On high." [*She places the letter on the table.*

When souls are thirsty they must drink,
Though it be poison!

[*She puts the letter and the lace in her bosom.*

Naught on earth have I.
Ah! but I need some one to love. The King
I would have truly loved, had he so willed it.
But me he leaves alone, of love bereft.

[*The great folding doors open. An* Usher *of the chamber in full dress enters.*

The Usher. [*In a loud voice.*] A letter from the King!

The Queen. [*As if suddenly awakened, with a joyful cry.*] From him! I'm saved!

SCENE III

The Queen, *the* Duchess d'Albuquerque, Casilda, Don Guritan, Ladies in Waiting, Pages, Ruy Blas.

[*All enter with solemnity, the* Duchess *at their head, followed by the women.* Ruy Blas *remains at the back of the chamber. He is magnificently dressed. His cloak falls over his left arm and hides it. Two pages, carrying the* King's *letter on a cushion of cloth of gold, kneel before the* Queen *at a few paces distant.*

Ruy Blas. [*At the back—aside.*] Where am I now?—How beautiful she is!
Oh, for what purpose am I here?

The Queen. [*Aside.*] 'Tis aid

From Heaven! [*Aloud.*] Give it me—be quick!
[*Turning to the portrait of the* KING.
My thanks,
Your Majesty! [*To the* DUCHESS.] Whence comes this letter, say?

The Duchess. From Aranjuez, madam, where the King
Now hunts.

The Queen. And from my soul I thank him. He
Has understood my need of words of love
From him, in my lone weariness. Come, then,
Now give it me.

The Duchess. [*Courtesying and pointing to the letter.*] I must inform you that
The custom is, that whatso'er it be,
I first must open it and read.

The Queen. Again!
Ah, well, then read.
[*The* DUCHESS *takes the letter and slowly unfolds it.*

Casilda. Let's hear the lines of love.

The Duchess. [*Reading.*] "Madam, the wind is high, and I have killed
Six wolves. Signed, Charles."

The Queen. [*Aside.*] Alas!

Don Guritan. [*To the* DUCHESS.] And is that all?

The Duchess. Yes, Count.

Casilda. [*Aside.*] Six wolves he's killed! How this excites
Th' imagination! Tender is your heart,
Exacting, weary, sick. Six wolves he's killed!

The Duchess. [*To the* QUEEN, *presenting the letter to her.*] If that your Majesty?——

The Queen. [*Pushing it away.*] Oh, no.

Casilda. [*To the* DUCHESS.] And this
Is really all?

The Duchess. Undoubtedly. What more
Should be? Our King is hunting; on the way
He writes declaring all he's killed, and states
The weather he has had. All this is well.
[*Examining the letter again.*
He writes—ah, no, he dictates.

The Queen. [*Snatching the letter and examining it herself.*]
Then, in short,
'Tis not his hand, only his signature.
[*She examines it with more attention, and seems struck with stupor.*
[*Aside.*] Is it delusion? the writing's just
The same as that o' the letter!
[*She indicates with her hand the letter she has just hidden in her bosom.*
Oh, what's this?
[*To the* Duchess.] Who, then, conveyed the letter?
The Duchess. [*Pointing to* Ruy Blas.] He is there.
The Queen. [*Half turning toward* Ruy Blas.] That young man?
The Duchess. 'Twas he himself who brought it.
He's a new equerry his Majesty
Has given to the Queen. A noble whom,
As from the King, my lord of Santa Cruz
Has introduced to me.
The Queen. His name?
The Duchess. He is
The noble Cæsar de Bazan—the Count
Of Garofa. If rumour be believed,
He is the most accomplished gentleman
That can be found.
The Queen. That's well. I'll speak to him.
[*To* Ruy Blas.] Sir——
Ruy Blas. [*Aside, trembling.*] Ah, she sees—she speaks to me. O God!
I tremble.
The Duchess. [*To* Ruy Blas.] Count, approach.
Don Guritan. [*Aside, and looking sideways at* Ruy Blas.] I did not dream
Of this—that young man! he an equerry!
[Ruy Blas, *pale and troubled, slowly advances.*
The Queen. You come from Aranjuez?
Ruy Blas. Yes, madam.
The Queen. The King is well?
[Ruy Blas *bows, she points to the royal letter.*

This letter was by him
Dictated?

Ruy Blas. He on horseback was when he
[*Hesitates a moment.*
To one of his attendants did the lines
Dictate.

The Queen. [*Aside, looking at* RUY BLAS.] His looks so pierce me that I dare
Not ask to whom. [*Aloud.*] 'Tis well, you may depart.
Ah!——
[RUY BLAS, *who had stepped back a few paces, turns again toward the* QUEEN.
Many nobles were assembled there? [*Aside.*
Why am I stirred on seeing this young man?
[RUY BLAS *bows, and she continues.*
Who were they?

Ruy Blas. Names I do not know. I was
But there a few short moments; for Madrid
I quitted but three days ago.

The Queen. [*Aside.*] Three days!
[*She looks at* RUY BLAS *with a troubled expression.*

Ruy Blas. [*Aside.*] Another's wife! Oh, frightful jealousy!
Of whom? A gulf has opened in my heart.

Don Guritan. [*Approaching* RUY BLAS.] You are an equerry unto the Queen.
One word with you. Know you your duty? You
To-night must in the next room stay to be
In readiness to open to the King
Should he arrive.

Ruy Blas. [*Trembling, aside.*] I open to the King! [*Aloud.*
But——he is absent now.

Don Guritan. Yet may he not,
Though unexpectedly, return?

Ruy Blas. [*Aside.*] Ah—how?

Don Guritan. [*Aside, observing* RUY BLAS.] What ails him?

The Queen. [*Who has heard all and is looking at* RUY BLAS.]
Oh, how pale he grows!
[RUY BLAS, *tottering, leans his arm on a great chair.*

Casilda. [*To the* QUEEN.] Madam,
This young man's ill!

Ruy Blas. [*Supporting himself with difficulty.*] I—I—oh, no!
But strange
It is, how that—the sun—fresh air—the length
Of road—— [*Aside.*] To open to the King!

[*He falls fainting on to the arm-chair. His cloak slips aside and shows his left hand to be bound up in blood-stained linen.*

Casilda. Great God,
He's wounded, madam, in the hand!

The Queen. A wound!

Casilda. He's losing consciousness! Quick, make him breathe!
Some essence!

The Queen. [*Feeling in her ruff.*] Here's a flask of mine contains
An extract.

[*At this moment her glance falls on the ruffle* RUY BLAS *wears on his right arm. Aside.*
'Tis the selfsame lace!

[*When she took the flask from her bosom, she in her trouble drew out the morsel of lace which was hidden there.* RUY BLAS, *whose eyes were fixed on her, saw and recognised it.*

Ruy Blas. [*Distracted.*] Oh—oh!

[*The eyes of the* QUEEN *and* RUY BLAS *meet. Silence.*

The Queen. [*Aside.*] 'Tis he!

Ruy Blas. [*Aside.*] Upon her heart!

The Queen. [*Aside.*] 'Tis he!

Ruy Blas. [*Aside.*] Grant, God,
That now I die!

[*In the confusion of the women pressing round* RUY BLAS, *no one had remarked what passed between the* QUEEN *and him.*

Casilda. [*Holding the flask for* RUY BLAS *to inhale from.*] How were you injured, say?
Was it just now? Ah, no! The wound I see
Must have reopened on the way. And why,
How happened it, that you were made to bear
The message from the King?

The Queen. I hope that soon
You'll finish questioning.

The Duchess. [*To* CASILDA.] What's this, my dear,
Unto the Queen?

The Queen. Since it was he who wrote
The letter, it was well he brought it me,
Was it not so?

Casilda. But he has never said
He wrote it.

The Queen. [*Aside.*] Oh! [*To* CASILDA.] Be still!

Casilda. [*To* RUY BLAS.] How is your Grace?
Are you now better?

Ruy Blas. I'm restored!

The Queen. [*To the ladies.*] 'Tis time
That we retire. To his apartments let
The Count be led. [*To the pages at the back.*
You know the King will not
Come back to-night. He will remain away
Through all the hunting season.

[*She retires with her attendants to her apartments.*

Casilda. [*Watching her go out.*] Ah! the Queen
Has something on her mind.

[*She goes out by the same door as the* QUEEN, *carrying the little casket of relics.*

Ruy Blas. [*Remains alone.*]

[*He seems as if listening for some time with deep joy to the last words of the* QUEEN, *and lost in reverie. The morsel of lace which the* QUEEN *had let fall in her trouble had remained on the ground. He picks it up, looks at it with emotion, and covers it with kisses. Then he raises his eyes to heaven.*

Mercy, O God!
Make me not mad! [*Looking at the morsel of lace.*
'Twas surely near her heart!

[*He hides it in his bosom.—Enter* DON GURITAN *by the door of the room into which he had followed the* QUEEN. *He walks slowly toward* RUY BLAS. *When close to him, he, without saying a word, half-draws his sword, and compares its appearance with that of* RUY BLAS'S.

They are not alike. He puts back his sword into the scabbard. Ruy Blas *looks at him with surprise.*

SCENE IV

Ruy Blas, Don Guritan

Don Guritan. [*Again pushing back his sword.*] I will bring two that are of equal length.

Ruy Blas. What mean you, sir?——

Don Guritan. [*Gravely.*] I was most deep in love
In sixteen hundred and fifty. Then I dwelt
In Alicante. There a young man was,
As handsome as the loves; he looked too near
Upon my mistress, passing every day
Beneath her balcony, before the old
Cathedral; he was prouder than a captain
Of an admiral's ship; Vasquez his name, and though
Bastard he was ennobled. Him I killed.

[Ruy Blas *tries to interrupt him; but* Don Guritan *prevents him by a gesture, and continues.*

And after that—it was toward sixty-six—
Gil, Count of Iscola—a splendid knight,
Sent to my beauty, named Angelica,
A loving letter which she showed, and a slave
Named Grifel of Viserta. Him I had
Despatched, and slew myself the master.

Ruy Blas. Sir!

Don Guritan. [*Continuing.*] And later—near the year eighty—I had cause
To think I was deceived by beauty, one
Of easy ways, through Tirso Gamonal,
One of those youths whose haughty faces charm,
And go so well with splendid feathers. 'Twas
The time when mules were shod with purest gold.
I slew Don Tirso Gamonal.

Ruy Blas. But what,
Sir, means all this?

Don Guritan. It means to show you, Count,
That if you draw, there's water in the well,

And that to-morrow morn the sun will rise
At four o'clock; that there's a lonely spot
Behind the chapel, far from any road,
Convenient for men of spirit. You
They call Cæsar, I am named Don Gaspar
Guritan Tassis y Guevarra, Count
Of Oñate.

Ruy Blas. [*Coldly.*] Well, sir, I will be there.

[*A few moments before,* CASILDA, *out of curiosity, had entered softly by the little door at the back, and had listened to the last words without having been seen by the speakers.*

Casilda. [*Aside.*] A duel! I must tell the Queen.

[*She disappears by the little door.*

Don Guritan. [*Still imperturbable.*] If, sir,
It pleases you to study and to know
My tastes, for your instruction I will say
I never much admired a coxcomb, or
A ladies' man with curled mustache, on whom
The women like to look, who sometimes are
All lackadaisical, and sometimes gay;
Who in the house speak with their eyes, and fall
In charming attitudes upon arm-chairs,
Just fainting at some little scratches.

Ruy Blas. But
I do not understand.

Don Guritan. You understand
Quite well. We both desire the same good things,
And in this palace one of us is one
Too many. You are equerry, in short,
And I the chamberlain. And so our rights
Are equal. I am ill-provided, though.
Our shares are not the same. I have the right
Of age, and you of youth. This frightens me.
At table where I fast, I see sit down
A hungry youth, with strong terrific teeth
And flaming eyes, and air of conqueror;
This troubles me; for vain contention were
Upon love's territory—that fine field,

Which always trembles with mere trifles—I
Should make th' assault but badly. I've the gout.
Besides, I am not such an arrant fool
As for the heart of a Penelope
To wrestle with a spark so prompt to faint.
Because you're handsome, tender, winning, 'tis
That I must kill you.

Ruy Blas. Well, then, pray try.

Don Guritan. Count
Of Garofa, to-morrow morn at hour
Of sunrise, at the place that's named, without
A servant or a witness, if you please,
We'll slaughter one another gallantly,
With sword and dagger, like true gentlemen,
Of houses such as ours.

[*He extends his hand to* RUY BLAS, *who takes it.*

Ruy Blas. No word of this?

[*The* COUNT *makes a sign of assent.*

Until to-morrow. [*Exit* RUY BLAS.

Don Guritan. [*Alone.*] No—no tremor in
His hand I found. To know he'll surely die,
And be thus calm, proves him to be a brave
Young fellow.

[*Noise of a key in the little door of the* QUEEN'S *room.*

Some one's surely at that door.

[*The* QUEEN *appears and walks briskly toward* DON GURITAN, *who is surprised and delighted to see her. She holds the little casket in her hands.*

SCENE V

DON GURITAN, *the* QUEEN

The Queen. [*Smiling.*] 'Twas you I sought to find!

Don Guritan. What brings to me
This honour?

The Queen. [*Placing the casket on the round table.*] Oh, 'tis nothing—or, at least,
A small affair, my lord. [*She laughs.*] Just now 'twas said
'Mong other things—you know how foolish are

The women—and Casilda said, maintained,
That you, for me, aught that I asked would do.
Don Guritan. And she was right.
The Queen. [*Laughing.*] But I the contrary
Declared.
Don Guritan. Then, madam, you were wrong.
The Queen. She said
That you for me would give your soul, your life——
Don Guritan. Casilda spoke right well in saying that.
The Queen. But I said No.
Don Guritan. And I say Yes, all things
I for your Majesty would do.
The Queen. All things?
Don Guritan. Yes, all.
The Queen. Well, let us see!—swear now that you
To please me will this instant do the thing
I ask you.
Don Guritan. By the venerated King
My patron saint, King Gaspar, I do swear!
Command, and I obey or die!
The Queen. [*Taking up the casket.*] Well, then,
You will set out and leave Madrid at once,
And carry straight this box of calambac
To Neubourg, to my father th' Elector.
Take it.
Don Guritan. [*Aside.*] I'm caught, indeed! [*Aloud.*] What!
to Neubourg!
The Queen. To Neubourg.
Don Guritan. Ah! six hundred leagues from here!
The Queen. Five hundred 'tis and fifty——
[*Pointing to the silken cover of the box.*
Pray take care
That on the road the blue fringe does not fade.
Don Guritan. When shall I start?
The Queen. This instant!
Don Guritan. Let it be
To-morrow!
The Queen. No, I can not yield.
Don Guritan. [*Aside.*] Entrapped

I am. [*Aloud.*] But——

The Queen. Now set off.

Don Guritan. But why is this?——

The Queen. You've promised me.

Don Guritan. Affairs——

The Queen. Impossible.

Don Guritan. The object is so frivolous——

The Queen. Be quick!

Don Guritan. One day alone!

The Queen. No, not a moment!

Don Guritan. For——

The Queen. Now do my bidding.

Don Guritan. I——

The Queen. No.

Don Guritan. But——

The Queen. Set off!

Don Guritan. If—if——

The Queen. Yes, I will kiss you!

[*She puts her arms round his neck and kisses him.*

Don Guritan. [*Vexed and yet delighted.*] I resist
No more. I will obey you, madam. [*Aside.*] God
Made himself man; so be't. As woman 'tis
The devil comes!

The Queen. [*Pointing to the window.*] A carriage there below
Is waiting for you.

Don Guritan. All then is prepared!

[*He writes hurriedly a few words on a piece of paper and rings a little bell. A* Page *enters.*

Page, take unto Don Cæsar de Bazan
This letter, and without one moment lost. [*Aside.*
This duel must be taken up again
When I return. I shall come back! [*Aloud.*] I go
At once to satisfy your Majesty.

The Queen. Now I'm contented.

[*He takes the casket, kisses the* Queen's *hand, makes a low bow, and exit. The next minute the sound of wheels is heard.*

The Queen. [*Falling into a chair.*] He shall not be killed!

ACT III—RUY BLAS

SCENE I.—THE COUNCIL CHAMBER OF THE KING'S PALACE AT MADRID. AT THE BACK A LARGE DOOR ABOVE SOME STEPS. IN THE ANGLE TO THE LEFT AN OPENING CLOSED BY TAPESTRY OF A RAISED WARP. IN THE OPPOSITE ANGLE A WINDOW. TO THE RIGHT A SQUARE TABLE WITH A GREEN VELVET COVER AROUND WHICH ARE PLACED STOOLS FOR EIGHT OR TEN PERSONS, CORRESPONDING TO THE NUMBER OF DESKS PLACED ON THE TABLE. AT THE SIDE OF THE TABLE WHICH FACES THE AUDIENCE IS A LARGE ARM-CHAIR, COVERED WITH CLOTH OF GOLD, AND SURMOUNTED BY A CANOPY OF THE SAME MATERIAL, WITH THE ARMS OF SPAIN AND THE ROYAL CROWN EMBLAZONED. A CHAIR AT ONE SIDE OF IT. WHEN THE CURTAIN RISES THE PRIVY COUNCIL OF THE KING IS ABOUT TO SIT

DON MANUEL ARIAS, *President of Castile*; DON PEDRO VELEZ DE GUEVARRA, COUNT DE CAMPOREAL, *Knight-Counsellor of the Chief Exchequer.* DON FERNANDO DE CORDOVA Y AGUILAR MARQUIS DE PRIEGO, *of the same quality.* ANTONIO UBILLA, *Chief Secretary of the Revenue.* MONTAZGO, *Counsellor of the Black Robe for India.* COVADENGA, *Chief Secretary for the Isles. Many other Counsellors. Those of the Robe in black. The others in Court Dress.* CAMPOREAL *has the Cross of Calatrava on his mantle,* PRIEGO, *the Golden Fleece at his neck.* DON MANUEL ARIAS, *President of Castile, and the* COUNT DE CAMPOREAL *chat together in low tones at the front. The others form groups here and there in the Hall*

DON MANUEL ARIAS. Behind such fortune lurks a mystery.

Count de Camporeal. He has the Golden Fleece. Behold him made
Chief secretary—minister—and now
Duke d'Olmedo he is.

Don Manuel Arias. All in six months.

Count de Camporeal. In some strange secret way he has been raised.

Don Manuel Arias. [*Mysteriously.*] The Queen!

Count de Camporeal. In fact, the King an invalid,
Insane at heart, lives at his first wife's tomb.
He abdicates the throne, shut up within
Th' Escurial, and leaves the Queen alone
To govern all things.

Don Manuel Arias. Dear Camporeal,
She reigns o'er us—Don Cæsar over her.

Count de Camporeal. His way of life is quite unnatural.
In the first place, he never sees the Queen;
They seem to shun each other. You may doubt
My word, but for six months I've watched them well,
For reasons good, and of it I am sure.
Then, from morose caprice, his dwelling is
A little lodge that's near th' Hôtel Tormez,
With shutters ever closed—where negroes two
Guard well the close-shut doors—lackeys who could
Tell much, if only that they were not dumb.

Don Manuel Arias. Mutes, then?

Count de Camporeal. Yes, mutes. His other servitors
Remain in those apartments which he has
Within the palace.

Don Manuel Arias. It is strange, indeed.

Don Antonio Ubilla. [*Who joined them a few moments before.*]
He comes of an old family—enough
That is.

Count de Camporeal. The strange thing seems that he pretends
To be an honest man. [*To* Don Manuel Arias.
Cousin he is
Unto the Marquis Salluste, who last year
Was banished—therefore 'twas that Santa Cruz
Befriended him.—In former years, this man,
Don Cæsar, who to-day our master proves,
Seemed but the greatest fool the moon saw born—
A hare-brained dolt—we know the people well
Who knew him. He for revenue consumed
His fortune—changed his loves, his carriages,
Each day. His fancies had ferocious teeth,
That could have eaten in a year Peru.

One day he ran away, 'twas not known where.

Don Manuel Arias. But time has made of this gay fool a sage
Severe.

Count de Camporeal. Frail women prudish grow when aged.

Ubilla. I think the man is honest.

Count de Camporeal. [*Laughing.*] Simpleton,
Ubilla! to be dazzled thus by such
A probity! [*In a significant tone.*] The household of the Queen,
Civil and ordinary [*looking at some papers*], almost costs
Seven hundred thousand golden ducats now
In yearly charges. Here's assuredly
A shady calm Pactolus, where one might
In safety throw a very certain net:
The water trouble, and the fish is there.

Marquis de Priego. [*Coming forward.*] Ah! that does not
displease you. But unwise
Are you to speak thus freely. Let me say,
My late grandfather, he who was brought up
With the count-duke, did oft advise that we
Should gnaw the King, but kiss the favourite.
Now let us, gentlemen, engage ourselves
With public business.

[*They sit round the table; some take up pens, others turn over the papers. The remainder are idle. A brief silence.*

Montazgo. [*Whispering to* UBILLA.] I have asked from you,
Out of the money meant for purchasing
Of relics, just a sum enough to buy
The post of Alcaid that my nephew wants.

Ubilla. [*Whispering.*] You—you—you said you'd shortly
give the place
Of bailiff o' the Ebro to my cousin
Melchior of Elva.

Montazgo. [*Exclaiming.*] Only just now
We dowered your daughter. The festivities
O' the nuptials still proceed.—Without a pauze
I am assailed——

Ubilla. [*Whispering.*] The Alcaid's post is yours.

Montazgo. [*Whispering.*] And yours the bailiff's.

[*They press hands.*

Covadenga. [*Rising.*] Gentlemen, we are
Castilian counsellors, and needful 'tis
In order that each keeps within his sphere,
To regulate our rights and take our shares.
The revenue of Spain is scattered when
A hundred hands control it. We need now
To end this public evil. Some acquire
Too much, the others do not have enough.
The farming of tobacco goes to you,
Ubilla. Indigo and musk belong
To Marquis de Priego. Camporeal
Receives the taxes of eight thousand men,
The import dues, the salt, a thousand sums,
And five per cent on gold, on jet, and on
The amber. [*To* MONTAZGO.
You who with a restless eye
Regard me, you have managed for yourself
To have the tax on arsenic, and the rights
Of snow. You have dry docks, and cards, and brass,
The ransoms of the citizens that should
Be punished with the stick—the ocean tithes,
And those on lead and rosewood. Nothing, sirs,
Have I. Decree me something.

Count de Camporeal. [*Bursting out laughing.*] Oh, the old
Devil! Of all he takes the largest share
Of profits. If the Indies we except,
He has the islands of both seas. What spread
Of wings! He holds Majorca in one claw,
And with the other clutches Teneriffe!

Covadenga. [*Growing angry.*] I say I've nothing!

Marquis de Priego. [*Laughing.*] He the negroes has.

[*They rise, all speaking at once and quarrelling.*

Montazgo. I should long since have made complaint. I want
The forests.

Covadenga. [*To the* MARQUIS DE PRIEGO.] Let me have the
arsenic, then
The negroes unto you I will give up.

[*A few moments before,* RUY BLAS *had entered by the door at the back, and had witnessed this scene without having*

been observed by the speakers. He is dressed in black velvet, with a mantle of scarlet velvet; he has a white feather in his hat, and wears the Golden Fleece at his neck. At first he listens to them in silence, but suddenly he advances with soft steps and appears in their midst at the height of the quarrel.

SCENE II

THE SAME, RUY BLAS

Ruy Blas. [*Bursting on them.*] I wish you joy!

[*All turn round. Silence of surprise and uneasiness.* RUY BLAS *puts on his hat, crosses his arms, and continues, looking them full in the face.*

Oh, faithful ministers!
And virtuous counsellors! Behold your mode
Of working, servants you who rob the house!
And without shame the dark hour choose, when Spain
Weeps in her agony!—caring for naught
Except to fill your pockets—afterward
To flee away! Branded you are before
Your country sinking into ruin. Oh,
Her grave you've dug, and robbed her in it too!
But look—reflect—and have some shame. The worth
Of Spain, her virtue and her greatness, pass
Away. Since the Fourth Philip's time we've lost
Not only Portugal and the Brazils
Without a struggle made, but in Alsace
Brisach, Steinfort in Luxembourg, and all
The Comté to its last small town; Rousillon,
Ormuz and Goa, five thousand leagues of coast
And Pernambuc, and the blue mountains' range.
But see—from western shores unto the east
Europe, which hates you, laughs at you as well.
As if your King a phantom only were,
Holland and England share his states, and Rome
Deceives you; half an army is the most
You dare to risk in Piedmont; though supposed
A friendly country, Savoy and its duke

Abound in subtle dangers. France awaits
The hour propitious to attack and take.
And Austria also watches you. And then
Bavaria's prince is dying—that you know.
As for your viceroys—your Medina, fool
Of love, fills Naples with such tales as are
A scandal; Milan's sold by Vaudémont,
Legañez loses Flanders. What for this
The remedy? The state is indigent,
The state is drained of troops and money both.
Upon the sea—where God his anger shows—
We have already lost three hundred ships
Without our counting galleys. And you dare!—
Ye sirs, for twenty years the people—think
Of it—and I have reckoned it is thus—
Have borne the burden under which they bend
For you—your pleasures and your mistresses—
The wretched people whom you still would grind,
Have sweated for your uses, this I say,
More than four hundred millions of their gold!
And this is not enough for you! and still
My masters!—— Ah, I am ashamed! At home
The spoilers, troopers, traverse all the land
And fight, the harvest burning. Carbines, too,
Are pointed at each thicket, just as 'twere
The war of princes; war is there between
The convents, war between the provinces,
All seeking to devour their neighbours poor,
Eaters o' the famished on a vessel wrecked!
Within your ruined churches grows the grass,
And they are full of adders. Many great
By ancestry, but workers none. Intrigue
Is all, and nothing springs from loyalty.
A sewer is Spain, to which th' impurity
Of all the nations drains.—In his own pay
Each noble has a hundred cut-throats, who
Do speak a hundred tongues. The Genoese,
Sardinian, Flemish.—Babel's in Madrid.
The magistrates, so stern to poverty,

Are lenient to the rich. When night comes on
There's murder, then each one cries out for help!
But yesterday they robbed me, yes, myself,
Near the Toledo bridge. One half Madrid
Now robs the other half; judges are bribed;
No soldier gets his pay. Old conquerors
O' the world—the Spaniards that we are—see now
What army have we? It but barely shows
Six thousand men, who barefoot go; a host
Made up of beggars, Jews, and mountaineers,
Who, armed with daggers, dress themselves in rags.
And every regiment plies a double trade.
When darkness falls disorder reigns, and then
The doubtful soldier changes to a thief.
The robber Matalobos has more troops
Than any baron. One of his followers
Made war upon the King of Spain. Alas!
The country peasantry, unshamed, insult
The carriage of the King. And he, your lord,
Consumed by grief and fear, stays all alone
Within the Escurial, with but the dead
He treads upon, and stoops his anxious brow
From which the empire crumbles fast! Behold,
Alas! all Europe crushing 'neath its heel
This land, once purpled—which is now in rags.
The state is ruined in this shocking age;
And you dispute among yourselves who shall
The fragments take! The Spanish nation, once
So great, lies in the shadow enervate,
And dies while you upon it live—mournful
As a lion that to vermin is a prey!—
O Charles the Fifth, in these dread times of shame
And terror, oh, what dost thou in thy tomb,
Most mighty Emperor? Arise—come, see
The best supplanted by the very worst;
This kingdom, now in agony—that was
Constructed out of empires—near its fall.
It wants thine arm! Come to the rescue, Charles!
For Spain is dying, blotted out, self-slain!

Thy globe, which brightly shone in thy right hand,
A dazzling sun that made the world believe
That thenceforth at Madrid the day first dawned,
Is now a dead star, that in the gloom grows less
And less—a moon three quarters gnawed away,
And still decreasing ne'er to rise again,
But be effaced by other nations! Oh,
Thy heritage is now put up for sale.
Alas! they make piastres of thy rays,
And soil thy splendours! Giant! can it be
Thou sleepest? By its weight thy sceptre now
They sell! A crowd of dwarfs deformed cut up
Thy royal robes to make their doublets, while
Th' imperial eagle, which beneath thy rule
Covered the world, and grasped its thunderbolts
And darted flame, a poor unfeathered bird
Is cooking in their stew-pan infamous!

[*The* Counsellors *are silent in their consternation. But the* Marquis de Priego *and the* Count de Camporeal *raise their heads and look angrily at* Ruy Blas. *Then* Camporeal, *after having spoken to* Priego, *goes to the table and writes a few words on a piece of paper which they both sign.*

Count de Camporeal. [*Pointing to the* Marquis de Priego *and presenting the paper to* Ruy Blas.] In both our names, your Grace, I tender you
The resignation of our posts.

Ruy Blas. [*Taking the paper calmly.*] Thanks. You
Will with your family retire. [*To* Priego.
You, sir,
To Andalusia. [*To* Camporeal.
You, Count, unto
Castile. To his estates each one. Set out
To-morrow!

[*The two nobles bow and exeunt haughtily, wearing their hats.* Ruy Blas, *turning to the other counsellors.*
Whosoe'er declines to go
My road, can follow now those gentlemen.

[*Silence for awhile.* Ruy Blas *seats himself in a chair*

with a back, placed by the side of the royal chair, and begins to open letters. While running his eyes over them one after another, COVADENGA, ARIAS, *and* UBILLA *exchange a few words in low tones.*

Ubilla. [*To* COVADENGA, *indicating* RUY BLAS.] A master
we have found, my friend. This man
Will rise to greatness.

Don Manuel Arias. Yes, if he has time.

Covadenga. And if he does not lose himself at view
Of all too near.

Ubilla. He will be Richelieu!

Don Manuel Arias. Unless 'tis Olivarez[1] that he proves!

Ruy Blas. [*After having run over in an excited manner a letter he had just opened.*] A plot! what's this? Now, sirs, what did I say? [*Reading.*

"Duke d'Olmedo must watch. A snare there is
Preparing to remove a personage,
One of the greatest of Madrid." [*Examining the letter.*
They say
Not whom. But I will watch.—Anonymous
The letter is.

[*Enter a* Court Usher, *who approaches* RUY BLAS *with a profound bow.*
How now—what's this?

Usher. Unto
Your Excellence, th' ambassador of France
I now announce.

Ruy Blas. Ah, Harcourt! at this time
I can not see him.

Usher. [*Bowing.*] And the Nuncio
Imperial waits in the saloon of honour
To see your Excellence.

Ruy Blas. Oh, at this hour
It is impossible.

[1] Gaspar Guzman, Count d'Olivarez, minister of Philip IV of Spain. For a time he seemed the redresser of abuses, but commerce and agriculture declined under his sway, and his foreign policy was disastrous. He was ultimately banished from court, and died in disgrace.—TRANSLATOR.

[*The* Usher *bows and exit. A few moments previously a* Page, *dressed in a livery of pinkish-gray and silver, had entered and approached* Ruy Blas.

Ruy Blas. [*Perceiving him.*] My page, to none
Whatever am I visible just now.

The Page. [*In a low voice.*] The Count de Guritan, who has returned
From Neubourg——

Ruy Blas. [*With a gesture of surprise.*] Ah!—Page, show to him my house
I' the suburb, saying that to-morrow he
Will find me there—if it should please him. Go. [*The* Page *exit.*
[*To the* Counsellors.
We shall have work together soon to do.
In two hours, gentlemen, return.

[*All exeunt, bowing low to* Ruy Blas.

[Ruy Blas *is alone, and walks a few steps, absorbed in deep reverie. Suddenly in the corner of the room the tapestry is raised, and the* Queen *appears. She is dressed in white, with a crown on her head. She seems radiant with joy, and looks at* Ruy Blas *with an expression of respect and admiration. She holds back the tapestry with one arm, behind which is perceptible a dark recess, in which a little door can be distinguished.* Ruy Blas, *in turning round, sees the* Queen, *and remains as if petrified by the apparition.*

SCENE III

Ruy Blas, *the* Queen.

The Queen. Oh, thanks!

Ruy Blas. O Heaven!

The Queen. You have done well to speak them thus.
I can refrain no longer, duke. I must
Press now that loyal hand so strong and true.

[*She walks quickly toward him and takes his hand, which she presses before he can prevent it.*

Ruy Blas. [*Aside.*] To shun her for six months, and then at once

Thus suddenly behold her!
[*Aloud.*] Madam, you
Were there?——
The Queen. Yes, duke, and I heard all you said.
Yes, I was there, and listened with my soul!
Ruy Blas. [*Pointing to the hiding-place.*] I never thought——
Madam, that hiding-place——
The Queen. It is unknown to all. A dark recess
That the Third Philip hollowed in the wall,
By means of which the master heard all things
While, spirit-like, invisible. And oft
From there have I beheld the Second Charles,
Mournful and dull, attend the councils where
They pillaged him and sacrificed the state.
Ruy Blas. And what said he?
The Queen. He nothing said.
Ruy Blas. Nothing!
What did he, then?
The Queen. He to the hunting field
Went off. But you! Your threatening words still ring
Upon mine ear. Oh! in what haughty ways
You treated them, and how superbly right
You were! The border of the tapestry
I raised and saw you. Yes, your flashing eyes
With lightning overwhelmed them, and without
Fury. Unto them everything was said.
You seemed to me the only upright one!
But where, then, have you learned so many things?
How comes it that you know effects and cause?
That everything you know? Whence cometh it
That your voice speaks as tongues of kings should speak,
Why, then, were you, like messenger of God,
So terrible and great?
Ruy Blas. Because—because
I love you! I whom all these hate. Because
I know full well that what they seek to crush
Must fall on you! Because there's nothing can
Dismay a reverent passion so profound.
Therefore to save you I would save the world!

Unhappy man, who loves you with such love!
Alas! I think of you as think the blind
Of day. O madam, hear me. I've had dreams
Uncounted. I have loved you from afar,
From the deep depths of shade; I have not dared
To touch your finger-tips. You dazzled me
As sight of angel might. I've suffered much,
Truly I have. Ah, madam, if you knew!
Six months I hid my love—but now I speak.
I fled—I shunned you, but I tortured was.
I am not thinking of these men at all.
I love you! And, O God! I dare to speak
The words unto your Majesty. Now say,
What I must do? Should you desire my death,
I'll die. Oh, pardon me—I'm terrified!

The Queen. Oh, speak! enchant me! Never in my life
Such words I've heard. I listen. 'Tis thy soul
That speaking overwhelms me quite. I need
Thy voice, thine eyes. Oh, if thou knewest! I
It is who suffered! Ah! a hundred times
When in the last six months your eyes shunned mine——
But no, I must not say these things so fast——
I'm most unhappy. Silent let me be.
I am afraid!

Ruy Blas. [*Listening with rapture.*] O madam, finish. You
With joy fill up my heart.

The Queen. Well, listen, then.
[*Raising her eyes to heaven.*
Yes, I will tell him all. Is it a crime?
So much the worse! But when the heart is torn
One can not help but show what there was hid.
Thou fled'st the Queen? Ah, well, the Queen sought thee.
Each day she came there to that secret place,
And listened to thee, gathering up thy words.
Silent, in contemplation of thy mind,
Which judged, and resolutely willed. Thy voice
Enthralled me, and gave interest to all.
To me thou seem'dst the real king, the right
True master. I it was that in six months—

Perchance thou doubtest—made thee mount unto
The summit; where by fate thou shouldst have been,
A woman placed thee. All that concerned me
Thou hast considered. First it was a flower,
But now an empire. Ah! I reverence thee.
At first I thought thee good—but afterward
I found thee great. My God, 'tis this that wins
A woman! If I now do ill, oh, why
Was I incarcerated in this tomb,
As in a cage they put a dove, deprived
Of hope, of love, without one gilded ray?
—Some day, when we have time, I'll tell thee all
That I have suffered—I, ever alone,
As if forgot! humiliated too
Most constantly. Now judge. 'Twas yesterday——
My chamber I disliked; you know—for you
Know all things—rooms there are where we feel more
Depressed than in some others. Mine I wished
To change. Now see what chains are ours, they would
Not let me. Thus a slave am I. O duke,
It must have been that Heaven sent thee here
To save the tottering state, and from the gulf
To draw the people back—the working ones,
And love me who thus suffer. Ah! I tell
Thee all at random, in my simple way.
You must, however, see that I am right.

Ruy Blas. [*Falling on his knees.*] Madam——

The Queen. [*Gravely.*] Don Cæsar—I to you give up
My soul. The Queen for others, I to you
Am but a woman. By the heart to you
It is that I belong. And I have faith
To know your honour will respect mine own
Whenever you shall call me I will come.
Ready I am. Sublime thy spirit is,
O Cæsar. And be proud, for thou art crowned
By genius. [*She kisses his forehead.*] Adieu!

[*She raises the tapestry and exit.*

SCENE IV

Ruy Blas [*alone*]

[*He is as if absorbed in seraphic contemplation.*

Before mine eyes
'Tis heaven I see! In all my life, O God,
This hour stands first. Before me is a world,
A world of light, as if the paradise
We dream about had opened wide and filled
My being with new life and brilliancy!
In me, around me, everywhere is joy,
Intoxication, mystery, and delight,
And pride, and that one thing that on the earth
Approaches most divinity, love—love,
In majesty and power. The Queen loves me!
O heavens, it is true—me—me—myself!
Since the Queen loves me I am more than King!
Oh, it is dazzling! Conqueror, happy, loved.
Duke d'Olmedo am I—and at my feet
Is Spain. I have her heart. That angel, whom
Upon my knees I contemplate and name,
Has by a word transfigured me and made
Me more than man. But in my starlit dream
Do I move waking! Yes, I'm very sure
'Twas she herself who spoke—quite sure 'twas she.
A little diadem of silver lace
She wore; and I observed the while she spoke
—I think I see it still—an eagle 'graved
Upon her golden bracelet. She confides
In me, has told me so.—Poor angel! Oh,
If it be true that God in granting love
Does by a miracle within us blend
That which can make man great with that which can
His nature soften, I who nothing fear
Since I am loved by her, I, who have power,
Thanks to her choice supreme, I, whose full heart
Might well the envy be of kings, declare—
Before my God who hears me—without fear,
And with loud voice, that, madam, you may trust

In me—unto my arm as Queen, unto
My heart as woman—for devotion, pure
And loyal, dwells i' the depth of my great love.
Ah, fear thou nothing!

[*During this speech a man had entered, by a door at the back, wrapped in a large cloak and with a hat gallooned in silver. He advances slowly toward* RUY BLAS *without being seen, and at the moment when* RUY BLAS, *intoxicated with ecstasy and happiness, raises his eyes to heaven, this man slaps him on the shoulder.* RUY BLAS *turns, startled as if awakening from a dream. The man lets fall his cloak, and* RUY BLAS *recognises* DON SALLUSTE. DON SALLUSTE *is dressed in a pinkish-gray livery gallooned with silver, like that of the* Page *of* RUY BLAS.

SCENE V

RUY BLAS, DON SALLUSTE

Don Salluste. [*Placing his hand on the shoulder of* RUY BLAS.]
Ah, good-day.
Ruy Blas. [*Aside.*] Great God!
I'm lost! It is the marquis that is here!
Don Salluste. I wager now you did not think of me.
Ruy Blas. Indeed, your lordship did surprise me.
[*Aside.*] Oh,
My misery is resumed. When turned toward
An angel, 'twas a demon came!

[*He hurries to the tapestry which conceals the little hiding-place, and bolts the door inside. Then he returns trembling to* DON SALLUSTE.

Don Salluste. Well, now,
How are you?
Ruy Blas. [*His eyes fixed on* DON SALLUSTE, *who is imperturbable, and as if hmself incapable of gathering together his ideas.*] Why this livery?
Don Salluste. [*Still smiling.*] I desired
To find an entrance to the palace. This
Admits me everywhere. I have assumed

Your livery, and find it suits me well.

[*He puts on his hat.* Ruy Blas *remains bareheaded.*

Ruy Blas. But I'm alarmed for you.

Don Salluste. Alarmed! What was
That word so ludicrous?

Ruy Blas. Exiled you were!

Don Salluste. You think so? Possibly.

Ruy Blas. If it should be
That in the palace you were recognised
In the broad daylight?

Don Salluste. Nonsense! Happy folks,
Who are about the court, would waste their time,
The time that flies so fast, remembering
A face that's in disgrace. Besides, who looks
Upon a lackey's profile?

[*He seats himself in the arm-chair.* Ruy Blas *remains standing.*

By the bye,
And if you please, what's this that in Madrid
They say? Is't true, that, burning with a zeal
Extravagant, and only for the sake
Of public funds, you've exiled a grandee,
That dear Priego? You've forgotten quite
That you're relations, for his mother was
A Sandoval—yours also. What the deuce!
A Sandoval doth bear on field of "or"
A bend of "sable." Look to your blazonry,
Don Cæsar, it is very clear. Such things,
My dear, between relations should not be,
The wolves that fight with other wolves, make they
Good leaders? Open wide your eyes for self,
But shut them for the others. For himself
Each one.

Ruy Blas. [*Recovering himself a little.*] However, sir—permit me, pray.
The Marquis de Priego, of the state
A noble, does great wrong in swelling now
Th' expenses of the kingdom. Soon we shall
Have need to put an army in the field;

We have not money, yet it must be done.
Bavaria's prince is at the point of death;
And yesterday the Count d'Harcourt, whom well
You know, said to me in the Emperor's
His master's name, that if the archduke should
Assert his claim, war would break out——

Don Salluste. The air
Seems rather chill—will you be good enough
To close the casement?

[RUY BLAS, *pale with shame and despair, hesitates a moment; then by an effort he goes slowly to the window and shuts it. He returns to* DON SALLUSTE, *who is still seated in the arm-chair, watching him in an indifferent manner.*

Ruy Blas. [*Continuing his endeavour to convince* DON SALLUSTE.] Deign, I beg, to see
How very difficult a war will prove;
What without money can we do? Listen,
My lord. Spain's safety in her honour lies.
For me—I've to the Emperor said, as if
Our arms were ready, I'd oppose him——

Don Salluste. [*Interrupting him, and pointing to his handkerchief, which he had let fall on entering.*] Stay!
Pick up my handkerchief.

[RUY BLAS, *as if tortured, again hesitates; then stoops and takes up the handkerchief, giving it to* DON SALLUSTE.

Don Salluste. [*Putting the handkerchief in his pocket.*] You did observe?——

Ruy Blas. [*With an effort.*] Yes, Spain is at our feet; her safety now
And public interest demand that each
Forgets himself. The nation blesses those
Who would release her. Let us dare be great,
And strike and save the people. Let us now
Remove the mask from knaves, and let in light
Upon intrigue.

Don Salluste. [*With indifference.*] First let me say all this
Is wearying—it of the pedant smacks,

His petty way of making monstrous noise
Concerning everything. What signifies
A wretched million, more or less, devoured,
That all these dismal cries are raised about?
My boy, great lords are not the pedant class;
Freely they live—I speak without bombast.
The mien of them who would redress abuse
Is pride inflated and with anger red!
Pshaw! now you want to be a famous spark
Adored by traders and by citizens.
'Tis very droll. Have newer fancies, pray.
The public good! First think now of your own.
Spain's safety is a hollow phrase; the rest
Can shout, my boy, as well as you can do.
And popularity? a rattling noise
Thought glory. Oh, what charming work to prowl
Like barking dog about the taxes! But
I know conditions better. Probity?
And faith? and virtue? faded tinsel, used
Already from the time of Charles the Fifth.
You are no fool. Must you be cured of all
This sentiment? You were a sucking child
When we did gaily and without remorse
By pin-pricks, or a kick, burst all at once
Your fine balloon, and amid roaring mirth
Let out the wind from all these crotchets.

Ruy Blas. But
My lord, however——

Don Salluste. [*With icy smile.*] You're astonishing.
Let us be serious now. [*In an abrupt and imperious manner.*
To-morrow, all
The morning you will wait at home for me,
Within the house I lent you. What I do
Now nears the end. Only retain the mutes
To wait upon us. In the garden have,
But hidden by the trees, a carriage, well
Appointed, horses, all prepared for use.
I will arrange relays. Do all I wish.
—You will want money, I will send it you.—

Ruy Blas. I will obey you, sir. I will do all.
But first, oh, swear to me that with this work
The Queen has naught to do.

Don Salluste. [*Playing with an ivory knife on the table, turns half round.*] With what are you
Now meddling?

Ruy Blas. [*Trembling and looking at him with terror.*] Oh, you are a fearful man!
My knees beneath me tremble.—Toward a gulf
Invisible you drag me. Oh, I feel
That in a hand most terrible I am!
You have some monstrous scheme. Something I see
That's horrible.—Have mercy upon me!
Oh, I must tell you—judge, alas! yourself
You knew it not. I love that woman!

Don Salluste. Yes.
I knew it.

Ruy Blas. Knew it!

Don Salluste. What, by Heaven, can
That signify?

Ruy Blas. [*Leaning for support against the wall, and as if speaking to himself.*] Then for mere sport he has,
The coward! this torture practised upon me!
Ah, this affair will be most horrible!
[*He raises his eyes to heaven.*
O God all-powerful! who tries me now,
Spare me, O God!

Don Salluste. There, that's enough—you dream!
Truly you think in earnest that you are
A personage, but 'tis buffoonery.
I to an end move on which I alone
Should know, an end that happier is for you
Than you can guess. But keep you still. Obey!
I have already said, and I repeat,
I wish your good. Proceed, the thing is done.
And after all, what are the woes of love?
We all go through them—troubles of a day.
Know you, an empire's destiny's concerned?
What's yours beside it? Willingly I'd tell

You all; but have the sense to comprehend.
Your station keep. I'm very good and kind.
A lackey though, of coarse clay or of fine,
Is but an instrument to serve my whims.
With your sort, what one wishes one can do.
Your master did disguise you as his plan
Required, and can unmask you at his will.
I made you a great lord—fantastic part—
But for the instant—and you have complete
The outfit. But forget not that you are
My servant. You pay court unto the Queen—
An incident—like stepping up behind
My carriage. Therefore reasonable be.

Ruy Blas. [*Who has listened distracted, as if he could not believe his ears.*] O God—O God! the just! the merciful!
Oh, of what crime is this the punishment?
What have I done? Oh, Thou our Father art,
And wouldst not that a man despair. Behold,
Then, where I am!—And willingly, my lord,
And without wrong in me—only to see
A victim agonized, in what abyss
You've plunged me! torturing thus a heart replete
With love and faith, to serve alone as means
For vengeance of your own! [*As if speaking to himself.*
For vengeance 'tis!
The thing is certain. I divine too well
It is against the Queen! What can I do?
Go tell her all? Great Heaven! become to her
An object of disgust and horror! Knave
With double face! A Crispin! Scoundrel base
And impudent, such as they bastinade
And drive away! Never!—I grow insane,
My reason totters! [*A pause. He ponders.*
God! behold what things
Are done! To build an engine silently,
To arm it hideously with frightful wheels
Unnumbered, then to see it work, upon
The stone to throw a livery'd one, a thing,
A serving man, and set in motion all—

And suddenly to watch come out, beneath
The wheels, some muddy, blood-stained rags, a head
All broken, and a warm and steaming heart,
And not to shudder then to find, despite
The name they call him, that the livery was
But outward covering of a man.
[*Turning toward* DON SALLUSTE.
But oh,
There still is time! Truly, my lord, as yet
Th' horrible wheel is not in motion. [*Throws himself at his feet.*
Oh,
Have pity on me! Mercy! Pity her!
You know that I a faithful servant am,
You often said it. See how I submit!
Oh, grace!
Don Salluste. The man will never understand,
This wearies me!
Ruy Blas. [*Trailing at his feet.*] Oh, mercy!
Don Salluste. Let us now
Have done. [*He turns toward the window.*
You badly closed the window there,
I'm sure. A draught comes thence.
[*He goes to the casement and shuts it.*
Ruy Blas. [*Rising.*] It is too much!
At present I'm Duke d'Olmedo, and still
Th' all-powerful minister! I raise my head
From 'neath the foot which crushes me.
Don Salluste. What's that
You say? Repeat the phrase. Is Ruy Blas
Indeed Duke d'Olmedo? Your eyes are bound.
'Twas only on Bazan that thou wast raised
To be Olmedo.
Ruy Blas. I will order you
To be arrested,
Don Salluste. I'll say who you are.
Ruy Blas. [*Excitedly.*] But——
Don Salluste. You'll acuse me? I've risked both our heads.
That was foreseen. Too soon do you assume
The air of triumph.

Ruy Blas. I'll deny it all.
Don Salluste. Pshaw! you're a child.
Ruy Blas. You have no proof!
Don Salluste. And you
No memory. I'll do just what I say,
And you had best believe me. But the glove
Are you, I am the hand.
[*Lowering his voice and approaching* RUY BLAS.
If thou obey'st
Me not, if thou to-morrow do not stay
At home preparing what I wish, if thou
Shouldst speak a single word of all which now
Is passing, if by look or gesture thou
Betray—first she, for whom thou fearest, shall,
By this thy folly, in a hundred spots
Be publicly defamed, and ruined quite,
And afterward she shall receive—in this
There's naught obscure—a paper under seal
Which in a place secure I keep; 'twas writ
Thou wilt remember by what hand? and signed
Thou knowest how? These are the words her eyes
Will read: "I, Ruy Blas, the serving-man
Of the most noble lord the Marquis of
Finlas, engage to serve him faithfully
On all occasions as a servant true
In public or in secrecy."
Ruy Blas. [*Crushed, and in husky voice.*] Enough.
I will, my lord, do what you please.
[*The door at the back opens. One sees the members of the Privy Council re-entering.* DON SALLUSTE *hastens to wrap his cloak round him.*
Don Salluste. [*In a low voice.*] They come!
[*Aloud, and bowing low to* RUY BLAS.
I am your humble servant, my lord duke. [*Exit.*

ACT IV—DON CÆSAR

SCENE I.—A SMALL, GLOOMY, BUT SUMPTUOUS ROOM. OLD-FASHIONED WAINSCOT AND FURNITURE, WITH OLD GILDING. THE WALLS COVERED WITH ODD HANGINGS OF CRIMSON VELVET PRESSED DOWN IN PLACES, AND AT THE BACK OF THE ARM-CHAIRS, AND GATHERED BY SHINING GOLD GALLOON INTO VERTICAL BANDS. AT THE BACK FOLDING DOORS. AT THE LEFT ANGLE OF THE WALL, A LARGE CORNER CHIMNEY WITH SCULPTURE OF THE TIME OF PHILIP II, AND AN ESCUTCHEON OF WROUGHT IRON INSIDE. AT THE OPPOSITE ANGLE A LITTLE DOOR LEADING TO A DARK CLOSET. A SINGLE WINDOW AT THE LEFT, PLACED VERY HIGH, HAS BARS ACROSS IT, AND AN INSIDE SPLAY LIKE THE WINDOWS OF PRISONS. ON THE WALLS ARE SOME OLD PORTRAITS SMOKE-BEGRIMED AND HALF DEFACED. A CHEST FOR CLOTHES AND A VENETIAN LOOKING-GLASS. LARGE ARM-CHAIRS IN THE FASHION OF PHILIP III'S TIME. A HIGHLY ORNAMENTED CUPBOARD AGAINST THE WALL. A SQUARE TABLE WITH WRITING MATERIALS ON IT. A LITTLE ROUND TABLE WITH GILT FEET IN A CORNER. IT IS MORNING

WHEN THE CURTAIN RISES, RUY BLAS, DRESSED IN BLACK WITHOUT HIS MANTLE AND WITHOUT THE FLEECE, IS SEEN WALKING ABOUT THE ROOM GREATLY AGITATED. AT THE BACK STANDS HIS PAGE MOTIONLESS, AS IF AWAITING ORDERS

RUY BLAS, *the* PAGE

RUY BLAS. [*Aside, as if speaking to himself.*] What is it
can be done? She must be saved!
Before all else! Nothing but her to be
Considered! Should my brains from on a wall
Spurt out, or should the gibbet claim, or should
Hell seize me, rescued she must be! But how?
To give my blood, my heart, my soul, all that
Were nothing—it were easy. But to break
This web! To guess, for guess one must, what schemes
This man constructing has combined! Sudden
He comes from out the shadow, and therein

Replunges. Lone in darkness what does he?
When I remember that at first to him
For self I pleaded! Oh, 'twas cowardice!
Moreover, it was stupid! This is why—
He is a wretch.—The thing has olden date,
No doubt.—How could I think, that when he held
His prey but half devoured, the demon would,
In pity for his lackey, leave the Queen!
Can we subdue wild beasts? Oh, misery!
I yet must save her! I, the cause of this!
At any price it must be done! All—all
Is ended. Now behold my fall! From height
So great so low! Have I then dreamed?—Yet, oh!
She must escape! But he! By what door will
He come—and by what trap, O God, will he,
The traitor black, proceed? As of this house,
So of my life, he is the lord. He can
The gilding all strip off. He has the keys
Of all the locks. Enter and leave he can,
Approaching in the dark to tread upon
My heart as on this floor. Yes, this is my dream!
Such fate confuses thought i' the rapid tide
Of things so quickly done. I am distraught.
No one thought have I clear. My mind—of which
I was so vain—O God! is now in such
A hurricane of rage and fear 'tis like
A reed storm-twisted!—Oh, what can I do?
Let me reflect. At first to hinder her
From stirring from the palace. Yes, 'tis that
Undoubtedly that is the snare. Around
Myself the whirlpool is, and darkness dense.
I feel the mesh, but see it not. Oh, how
I suffer!—'Tis decided. To forewarn—
Prevent her going from the palace—this
At once to do. But how? No one I have!

[*He reflects earnestly. Suddenly, as if struck with an idea, and having a ray of hope, he raises his head.*

Don Guritan! Ah, yes, he loves her well,
And he is loyal!

[*He signs to the* Page *to approach, then speaks low.*
Page, this instant go
Unto Don Guritan. Make him from me
Apologies; and beg him then without
Delay to seek the Queen, and pray her in
My name, and in his own, that whatsoe'er
May happen or be said, on no account
To leave the palace for three days. To stir
Not out. Now run! [*Recalling the* Page.
Ah!
[*He takes a leaf and a pencil from his note case.*
Let him give these words
Unto the Queen—and watch! [*He writes on his knee rapidly.*
"Believe what says
Don Guritan; as he advises do!"
[*He folds the paper and gives it to the* Page.
As for the duel, tell him I was wrong,
That I am at his feet, that I have now
A trouble, beg of him to pity me,
And take my supplication to the Queen
On th' instant. Tell him that I will to him,
In public, make apologies. And say
There is for her a danger imminent.
She must not venture out for quite three days
Whate'er occurs—— Exactly do all this;
Go, be discreet, and nothing let appear.

Page. I am to you devoted—for you are
A master good.

Ruy Blas. Run fast, my little Page.
Hast thou well understood?

Page. Oh, yes, my lord.
Be satisfied. [*Exit* Page.

Ruy Blas. [*Alone, falling into an arm-chair.*] My thoughts grow calmer now.
Yet I forget, and feel things all confused
As were I mad. Ah, yes, the means are sure.
Don Guritan—— But I myself? Is there
The need to wait Don Salluste here? Wherefore?
Oh, no, I will not wait, and that perchance

Will paralyze him for a day. Within
A church I want to pray. I'll go—I've need
Of help, and God will me inspire!

[*He takes his hat from a side table, and shakes a little bell placed on the table. Two negroes, dressed in pale-green velvet brocaded with gold, jackets plaited into great lappets, appear at the door at the back.*

I leave,
But very soon a man will hither come—
And by an entrance known to him. May be,
When in the house, as if he were indeed
The master, he will act. Let him so do.
And if some others come—— [*After hesitating a moment.*
My faith! why then
You'll please to let them enter.

[*By a gesture he dismisses the negroes, who bow in token of obedience, and exeunt.*

Now I go! [*Exit.*

[*At the moment the door closes on* Ruy Blas *there is heard a great noise in the chimney, from which suddenly falls a man wrapped in a tattered cloak. It is* Don Cæsar *who throws himself into the room.*

SCENE II

Don Cæsar

Don Cæsar. [*Scared, out of breath, stupefied, disordered, with an expression of mingled joy and anxiety.*] 'Tis I! So much the worse!

[*He rises, rubbing the leg on which he has fallen, and comes into the room hat in hand and bowing low.*

Your pardon, pray!
But heed me not. I don't attend—go on
With your discourse, continue I entreat,
I enter rather rudely—sirs, for that
I'm sorry!

[*He stops in the middle of the room, perceiving he is alone.*

No one here?—When on the roof
Just now I perched, I thought I heard the sound

Of voices.—No one, though! [*Seats himself in an arm-chair.*
That's very well.
Let me now gather up my thoughts. And good
Is solitude. Oh, what events!—Marvels
With which I'm charged, just as a wetted dog
Who shakes off water. First those Alguazils
Who seized me in their claws, and that absurd
Embarkment; then the corsairs, and the town
So big where I was beaten sorely. Then
Temptations of that sallow woman; next,
Departure from the prison; travels, too,
And at the last return to Spain. And then—
Oh, what a tale!—The day that I arrived,
Those selfsame Alguazils the first I met.
My desperate flight, and their enraged pursuit;
I leaped a wall, and then I saw a house
Half-hidden by the trees; I thither ran;
None saw me, so I nimbly climbed from shed
To roof; at last I introduced myself
Into the bosom of a family
By coming down a chimney, where I tore
To rags my newest mantle, that now hangs
About my heels. By Heaven, Cousin Salluste,
You are a braggart rogue!

[*Looking at himself in a little Venetian glass placed on the sculptured chest.*

My doublet here
Has kept to me through these disasters all.
It struggles yet.

[*He takes off his mantle and admires in the glass his rose-coloured doublet, now torn and patched; then he puts his hand sharply to his leg, with a look at the chimney.*

But in my fall my leg
Has suffered horribly!

[*He opens the drawers of the chest. In one of them he finds a mantle of light-green velvet embroidered with gold. The mantle given by* DON SALLUSTE *to* RUY BLAS. *He examines it and compares it with his own.*

It seems to me

This mantle is more decent than my own.

[*He puts on the green mantle, and leaves his own in the chest, after having carefully folded it up. He adds his hat, which he crushes under the mantle with a blow of his fist. Then he shuts the drawer, and struts about proudly draped in the fine mantle embroidered with gold.*

'Twill do. Behold me now returned. All is
Proceeding well. Ah! cousin very dear,
You wished to send me off to Africa,
Where man is mouse unto the tiger! Ah!
I'll be revenged on you most savagely,
My cursèd cousin, when I've breakfasted.
In my right name I'll go to you, and drag
With me a troop of rogues, such as can smell
The gibbet a league off—and more, I will
Deliver you alive, thus to appease
The appetites of all my creditors,
These followed by their little ones.

[*He perceives in the corner a pair of splendid boots trimmed with lace. He takes off his shoes in a leisurely manner, and, without scruple, puts on the new boots.*

But first
Now let me see where all his perfidies
Have led me. [*After looking all round the room.*
A mysterious dwelling, fit
For tragedies. Closed doors and shutters barred,
A dungeon quite. Into this charming place
One enters from the top, just as there comes
The wine into the bottles. [*With a sigh.*
Ah! good wine
Is very good.

[*He notices the little door at the right, opens it, and hastily enters the closet with which it communicates, and then comes back with a gesture of astonishment.*

Oh, wonders, wonders more!
Where everything is closed, a little room
Without the means of egress!

[*He goes to the door at the back, half-opens it, and looks out; he lets it close and comes to the front.*

Not a soul!—
Oh, where the deuce am I?—At any rate,
I've managed to escape the Alguazils.
What matters all the rest? Need I be scared
And take a gloomy view, because I ne'er
Before beheld a house like this?
[*He seats himself in the arm-chair, and yawns, but soon gets up again.*
Come, though,
I feel the dulness here is horrible!
[*Perceiving a little corner cupboard in the wall.*
Let's see, this looks to me a little like
A bookcase.
[*He opens it, and finds it to be a well-furnished larder.*
Ah! 'tis just the thing.—A pie,
A watermelon, and some wine. A cold
Collation for emergency. By Jove!
I'd prejudices 'gainst this house.
[*Examines the flagons one after the other.*
All good.—
Come, now! This place is worthy of great praise.
[*He goes to the corner, and brings thence to the front a little round table, on which he places the contents of the larder—bottles, dishes, etc. He adds a glass, plate, fork, etc. Then he takes up one of the bottles.*
Let's read this one the first.
[*He fills the glass, and drinks off the wine.*
A work that is
Most admirable. The production fine
Of that so famous poet called the sun!
Xérès-des-Chevaliers can nothing show
More ruby-like. [*He sits, and pours out another glass of wine.*
What book's worth this? Find me
Something that is more spiritual! [*He drinks.*
Ah!
This comforts! Let us eat. [*He cuts the pie.*
I have outstripped
Those dogs of Alguazils. They've lost the scent.
[*He begins eating.*

The king of pies! and as for him who is
The master here, should he drop in——
[*He goes to the sideboard, and brings thence a glass and a plate.*
Why, him
I now invite, if that he does not come
To drive me hence. Let me be very quick.
[*He takes large mouthfuls.*
My dinner done, I'll look about the house.
Who can inhabit it? Maybe, he is
A jolly fellow. This place can but hide
Some feminine intrigue. Pshaw! What's the harm
That here I do? What is it, I beseech?
Naught but this worthy's hospitality
After the ancient way,
[*He half kneels, surrounding the table with his arms.*
Embracing thus
The altar. [*He drinks.*
Firstly, though, this wine is not
A bad man's wine. And then if any one
Should come, I'd certainly declare myself.
How you would rage, my old accursèd coz!
What, that low fellow, that Bohemian!
That beggarly black sheep Zafari? Yes,
Don Cæsar de Bazan, the cousin he
Of the Don Salluste! What a fine surprise!
And what a hubbub in Madrid! When was't
That he returned? This morning, or this night?
What tumult everywhere at such a bomb,
The great forgotten name that all at once
Again is heard! Don Cæsar de Bazan!
Yes, if you please, good sirs. Nobody thought—
Nobody spoke of him—then he's not dead!
He lives, my dames and gentlemen! The men
Will cry, "The deuce!" The women they will say,
"Indeed!" Ay! ay! Soft sound that mingles with
The barking of three hundred creditors
As you go home! Fine part to play! Alas!
I'm wanting money for it. [*A noise is heard at the door.*

Some one comes!
No doubt t' expel me like a vile buffoon.—
No matter, though. Cæsar, do naught by halves!

[*He wraps himself in his cloak up to the eyes. The door at the back opens. A* LACKEY *in livery enters bearing a great courier's bag on his back.*

SCENE III

DON CÆSAR, *a* LACKEY

Don Cæsar. [*Scanning the* LACKEY *from head to foot.*] Whom seek you here, my friend? [*Aside.*
I must assume
Great confidence—the peril is extreme.

The Lackey. Don Cæsar de Bazan?

Don Cæsar. [*Lowering his mantle from his face.*] Don Cæsar! That's
Myself! [*Aside.*
Here is the wonderful!

The Lackey. You are,
My lord, Don Cæsar de Bazan?

Don Cæsar. By Heaven,
I have the honour so to be. Cæsar,
The true and only Cæsar! Count of Gar——

The Lackey. [*Placing the bag on the arm-chair.*] Now deign to see if the amount be right.

Don Cæsar. [*Dazed—aside.*] Some money! Oh, it is too wonderful! [*Aloud.*
My man——

The Lackey. You'll condescend to count. It is
The sum that I was told to bring you.

Don Cæsar. [*Gravely.*] Ah!
'Tis well, I understand. [*Aside.*
The devil now
I wish—— But there, we must not disarrange
This admirable story. In the nick
Of time it comes. [*Aloud.*
Now want you a receipt?

The Lackey. Not so, my lord.

Don Cæsar. [*Pointing to the table.*] Put there the money bag.
[*The* LACKEY *obeys.*
Whom comes it from?
The Lackey. My lord knows very well.
Don Cæsar. Undoubtedly, but still——
The Lackey. This money here—
And this is what is needful that I add—
Now comes for purpose that you know, from him
You know.
Don Cæsar. [*Satisfied with the explanation.*] Ah!
The Lackey. Both of us must careful be—
Hush!
Don Cæsar. Hush!—This money comes—— The phrase is most
Magnificent! Repeat it once again.
The Lackey. This money——
Don Cæsar. All explains itself. It comes
From him I know——
The Lackey. For purpose that you know.
We must——
Don Cæsar. The pair of us!
The Lackey. Be guarded now.
Don Cæsar. It is quite clear.
The Lackey. I do not understand,
I but obey.
Don Cæsar. Pshaw—pshaw!
The Lackey. But you, I know,
Do comprehend.
Don Cæsar. The deuce!
The Lackey. Sufficient 'tis.
Don Cæsar. I take it and I understand, my boy,
Receiving money always easy is.
The Lackey. Hush!
Don Cæsar. Hush! Deuce take it—ah! we must not now
Imprudent be!
The Lackey. Count it, my lord!
Don Cæsar. For what,
Pray, do you take me?
[*Admiring the rotundity of the bag on the table,*

Oh! the fine paunch!

The Lackey. [*Insisting.*] But——

Don Cæsar. I do confide in thee.

The Lackey. The gold is in
Broad quadruples, that weigh their full seven drachms
And six-and-thirty grains, or good doubloons,
The silver in cross-maries.

[DON CÆSAR *opens the great bag and takes from it several small bags full of gold and silver, which he opens and empties on to the table admiringly; then he digs his hand into the bags of gold and draws out handfuls, filling his pockets with quadruples and doubloons.*

Don Cæsar. [*Pausing, with majesty. Aside.*] Now behold
My fine romance—the crown of fairy-dreams
Is dying for love of a fat million. [*He continues filling his pockets.*
Oh, joy! I take in like a galleon!

[*One pocket filled, he passes to another. He seeks everywhere for pockets, and seems to have forgotten the* LACKEY.

The Lackey. [*Who looks at him calmly.*] And now I wait your orders.

Don Cæsar. [*Turning round.*] What to do?

The Lackey. To promptly execute without delay
A something which you know, but I do not,
A thing of great importance——

Don Cæsar. [*Interrupting him as if understanding.*] Public 'tis
And private——

The Lackey. Which this instant should be done.
I say what I was told to say.

Don Cæsar. [*Slapping him on the shoulder.*] And I
Applaud thee for it—faithful servant thou!

The Lackey. That nothing be delayed, my master sends
Myself to help you.

Don Cæsar. Acting in accord,
Let us do what he wishes. [*Aside.*] Hang me now
If I know what to tell him! [*Aloud.*] Galleon,
Come here, and first [*He fills the other glass with wine.*
Drink this!

The Lackey. Indeed, my lord——

Don Cæsar. Drink this.

[*The* Lackey *drinks, and* Don Cæsar *again fills the glass.*

'Tis wine of Oropesa!

[*He makes the* Lackey *sit down, and plies him with wine.*

Now
Let's chat. [*Aside.*
His eyes already sparkle.

[*Aloud, and stretching himself on his chair.*

Man
Is naught, dear friend, but black smoke that proceeds
From out the passions' fire. Pshaw! I declare

[*Pours wine for him to drink.*

'Tis rubbish this I'm telling thee. At first
The smoke, unto blue heaven recalled, comports
Itself in manner different from when
'Tis in a chimney. It mounts gaily, while
We tumble down. [*He rubs his leg.*
Only vile lead is man.

[*He fills the two glasses.*

Let's drink. All thy doubloons are of less worth
Than is a passing drunkard's song.

[*Approaching nearer to him in a mysterious manner.*

But see,
Be prudent. The o'erloaded axle breaks;
The wall without foundation suddenly
Gives way.—My mantle's collar please to hook.

The Lackey. [*Haughtily.*] My lord, I'm not a valet.

[*Before* Don Cæsar *can prevent him, he rings the little bell on the table.*

Don Cæsar. [*Aside—terrified.*] Oh, he rings!
The master, perhaps, will come himself. I'm caught!

[*Enter one of the* Negroes. Don Cæsar, *a prey to the greatest anxiety, turns toward the opposite side, as if not knowing what to do.*

The Lackey. [*To the* Negro.] Fasten my lord's clasp.

[*The* Negro *gravely approaches* Don Cæsar, *who looks at him as if stupefied. Then he fastens the mantle, bows, and goes out, leaving* Don Cæsar *petrified.*

Don Cæsar. [*Rising from the table—aside.*] On my word of honour!

Beelzebub's abode this is! [*He comes to the front and strides about.*
My faith!
Now let things drift and take what comes. At least,
I'll stir the crowns; a coffer full of them.
The money I have got! What shall I do
With it?
[*Turning toward the* LACKEY, *who is still at the table, drinking, and who begins to reel in his chair.*
Your pardon—stop. [*Musing—aside.*
Now, let me see—
If I should pay my creditors?—for shame!
—At least, to calm their minds that are so prompt
At turning sour—if I should water them
With something on account? What good is it
To water flowers so villainous? How now
The devil did I think of such a thing?
Nothing there is like money to corrupt
A man, and fill him up unto the throat
With all mean sentiments! E'en if he were
From Hannibal himself descended, him
Who conquered Rome! To see me paying debts
I owe! what would they say? Ah, ah!
The Lackey. [*Emptying his glass.*] What now
Do you command of me?
Don Cæsar. Let be—I am
Reflecting. Drink, while waiting.
[*The* LACKEY *begins drinking again.* DON CÆSAR *continues to muse; then suddenly strikes his forehead, as if he had found an idea.*
Yes! [*To the* LACKEY.
Get up
Immediately. See, now, what must be done.
Thy pockets fill with gold.
[*The* LACKEY *rises, stumbling, and fills the pockets of his coat,* DON CÆSAR *helping him as he continues.*
Go thou unto
The lane which leads from out the Mayor Square,
Enter at Number Nine. A narrow house;
A pleasant dwelling, if it did not hap

The glass panes at the right were paper-patched.

The Lackey. A one-eyed house ?[1]

Don Cæsar Oh, no, it only squints.[1]

One might be crippled mounting up the stairs,
So take you care.

The Lackey. A ladder is't ?

Don Cæsar. Almost,

But steeper. Up above, a beauty dwells,
Easy to know—beneath a threepenny cap
Thickish disordered hair. She's rather short
And red,—a charming woman, though. My boy,
You'll be respectful, she my dear love is,
Lucinda fair, with eyes like indigo,
Once she; who danced fandango for the Pope
At eve to see. Count out and give to her
A hundred of the ducats, in my name.
Then, in a hovel near, you'll see a stout
And red-nosed devil, with an old felt hat
Dragged down upon his eyebrows, and a plume,
A feather brush, that tragically hangs
Astonished from it; rapier at his side,
And rags upon his back. Give next, from me,
Unto this creature six piastres.—Then
Go farther, thou wilt find a hole, black like
An oven, 'tis a tavern at cross roads;
There smokes and drinks i' the porch, a frequenter,
A gentle-mannered man who leads a life
That's elegant, a gentleman from whom
An oath ne'er dropped, my heart's friend he; his name
Is Goulatromba. Give him thirty crowns!
And tell him for thanksgiving he alone
Must drink them quick, and he shall have some more.
Give to these rascals in the biggest coins,
And do not wonder at the eyes they'll ope.

The Lackey. And afterward ?

Don Cæsar. Why, keep the rest. And then
At last——

[1] *Maison borgne*—French slang for a disreputable house; and *louche*, for a suspicious one.—Trans.

The Lackey. What would my lord?
Don Cæsar. Then surfeit thou
Thyself, thou scamp. Break many pots, and make
Much noise, and not until to-morrow, in
The night, go home.
The Lackey. Enough, my prince.
[*He moves toward the door in a zigzag way.*
Don Cæsar. [*Aside, observing his walk.*] He is
Abominably drunk! [*Recalling the other, who turns back.*
Ah! now—when out
Thou goest, idle folks will follow thee.
Do honour to the drink thou'st had. Try thou
To bear thyself in noble fashion. If
By chance some crowns from out thy stocking drop,
Then let them fall—and if assayers, clerks,
Some scholars, or the beggars that one sees
Pass by, should pick them up, let them do so.
Don't be a mortal fierce, that they would dread
T' approach.—And e'en if from thy pocket some
They take—be thou indulgent. They are men
As we. And, as you see, it is a law
For us, in this world full of misery,
To give sometimes a little joy to all
Who live. [*With melancholy.*
Perchance they will be hanged some day!
Show, then, the kindness to them which is due!
Go, now.
[*The* LACKEY *goes out. Left alone,* DON CÆSAR *sits down again, and leans his elbow on the table, appearing to be plunged in deep thought.*
It is the duty of the sage
And Christian having money that he use
It well. For eight days at the very least
I have enough. These will I live. And should
A little money still remain, I will
Employ it piously. But I must not
Be over-confident. Undoubtedly
'Tis all a blunder, and from me it will
Be taken—ah! the thing will all become

Misunderstood. A fine scrape this of mine——

[*The door at the back opens. Enter an old gray-haired* Duenna *in black dress and mantle, and with a fan.*

SCENE IV

Don Cæsar, *a* Duenna

The Duenna. [*At the threshold of the door.*] Don Cæsar de Bazan?

[Don Cæsar, *absorbed in his meditations, turns his head suddenly.*

Don Cæsar. Now, then, what is it? [*Aside.*

A woman! Oh!

[*While the* Duenna *makes a low, respectful courtesy at the back, he comes to the front wonder-struck.*

The devil or Salluste
Must be mixed up in this! Next I expect
To see my cousin here.—Duenna, oh! [*Aloud.*
'Tis I, Don Cæsar; tell your business, pray. [*Aside.*
Most commonly it is a woman old
That ushers in a young one.

The Duenna. [*Bowing and making sign of the cross.*] I, my lord,
Salute you, on this fast day, in the name
Of Him o'er whom there's nothing can prevail.

Don Cæsar. [*Aside.*] A gallant ending that begins devoutly. [*Aloud.*] Amen. Good-day.

The Duenna. May God maintain you, e'er
In happiness! [*Mysteriously.*
Know you of some one who
Has sent me now, with whom you've planned to-night
A secret meeting?

Don Cæsar. Oh, I'm capable
Of such a thing.

The Duenna. [*Who takes from her farthingale a folded letter which she shows to him, but without allowing him to take it.*]
Then you indeed it is,
Gallant discreet, who've just addressed to one
Who loves you, for to-night a message—one

Whom you know well?

Don Cæsar. It must be I.

The Duenna. Good—good!

The lady married to some dotard old
Is forced, no doubt, to careful be. I was
Desired to hither come. Her I know not,
But you know her—it was her waiting-maid
Who told me about things. That was enough,
Without the names.

Don Cæsar. Excepting mine.

The Duenna. 'Tis plain,
Th' appointment for the lady has been made
By her soul's friend—but fearing there may be
Some snare, and knowing too much caution ne'er
Spoiled aught, she sends me here from your own mouth
To have the confirmation——

Don Cæsar. Oh, the old
And surly thing! What fuss about a sweet
Love-letter! Yes, 'tis I myself, I tell
You so.

The Duenna. [*Placing on the table the folded letter, which* DON CÆSAR *looks at with curiosity.*]
In that case then, if you it be,
The one word, *Come*, upon the letter you
Will write—but not by your own hand—that so
There may be nothing compromised.

Don Cæsar. Indeed!
From mine own hand! [*Aside.*
A message well conveyed!

[*He puts out his hand to take the letter; but it has been resealed and the* DUENNA *will not let him touch it.*

The Duenna. You must not open. You will recognise
The fold.

Don Cæsar. By Heaven! [*Aside*
I who burn to see!——
But let me play my part!

[*He rings the little bell. One of the* Negroes *enters.*
Know'st thou to write?

[*The* Negro *nods an affirmative sign.*

Don Cæsar. [*Aside.*] A sign! [*Aloud.*] Art thou then dumb, thou rascal?

[*Again the* Negro *makes the sign of affirmation. Fresh stupefaction of* Don Cæsar. *Aside.*

Well!

Continue! Mutes appear the latest thing!

[*To the* Mute, *showing him the letter which the old woman holds down on the table.*

Write there: *Come.*

[*The* Mute *writes.* Don Cæsar *signs to the* Duenna *to take back the letter, and to the* Mute *to go. Exit the* Mute.

Ah! he is obedient!

The Duenna. [*With an air of mystery again placing the letter in her farthingale, and approaching nearer to* Don Cæsar.]

To-night you'll see her. Is she very fair?

Don Cæsar. Oh, charming!

The Duenna. 'Twas the cunning waiting-maid
Who managed it. At sermon-time aside
She took me. Oh, how beautiful was she!
With angel's profile and a demon's eye.
Knowing in love affairs she seemed to be.

Don Cæsar. [*Aside.*] I'd be contented with the maid!

The Duenna. We judge—
For always beauty makes the plain afraid—
So with Sultana and her slave, and with
The master and his man. Most certainly
Your love is very beautiful.

Don Cæsar. I'm proud,
Indeed, to think so!

The Duenna. [*Making a courtesy and about to withdraw.*] Sir, I kiss your hand.

Don Cæsar. [*Giving her a handful of doubloons.*] I'll grease thy palm. Old woman, stop.

The Duenna. [*Pocketing them.*] Ah, youth
Is gay to-day!

Don Cæsar. [*Dismissing her.*] Now go.

The Duenna. [*Courtesies.*] If you have need——
I'm named Dame Oliva. Saint Isidro,

The convent——

[*She goes out. Afterward the door reopens and her head appears.*

Always at the right I sit
Of the third pillar entering the church.

[DON CÆSAR *turns round with impatience. The door closes; again it half opens and the old woman reappears.*

To-night you'll see her! In your prayers, my lord,
Remember me.

Don Cæsar. [*Driving her away angrily.*] Ah!

[*The* DUENNA *disappears and the door closes.*

Don Cæsar. [*Alone.*] Now I'm resolved, my faith,
At nothing more to be at all surprised.
I'm in the moon. Behold a love affair
Now comes; I am about to satisfy
My heart, after long hunger. [*Musing.*] Oh, all this
To me just now seems mighty good. But ah!
Beware the end!

[*The door at the back opens.* DON GURITAN *appears with two long naked swords under his arm.*

SCENE V

DON CÆSAR, DON GURITAN

Don Guritan. [*At the back.*] Don Cæsar de Bazan?

Don Cæsar. [*Turning and perceiving* DON GURITAN *with the two swords.*] And now! Well, well! Events were fine enough,
But better still they are. A dinner good,
Then money; and an assignation—now
A duel! Cæsar in his natural state
Again am I!

[*He greets* DON GURITAN *gaily, with demonstrative salutations;* DON GURITAN *looks at him impatiently, and advances to the front with a firm step.*

Here is he, my dear lord.
And will you please to enter—take a chair—

[*He places an arm-chair—*DON GURITAN *remains standing.*

Be seated, pray; without formality,
As if at home. I'm charmed to see you, sir;
There, let us chat a moment. Tell me now
What's doing in Madrid? A charming place!
I nothing know; but I suppose that still
They wonder at the Matalobos, and
The Lindamere! As for myself, I'd fear
The stealer of our hearts as peril more
Than stealer of our money bags. Oh, sir,
The women! Sex possessed! My brain is cracked
Where they're concerned, they so enslave me. Speak,
And tell me what is doing nowadays;
I am but half alive—an ox—a thing
Absurd—with naught that's human left to him,
A dead man risen, an hidalgo true
Of Old Castile. They've robbed me of my plume,
And I my gloves have lost. I come from lands
Most wonderful.

Don Guritan. You come, dear sir? Ah, well,
I've just arrived from farther off than you!

Don Cæsar. [*Brightening up.*] From what distinguished shore?

Don Guritan. Down yonder, in
The north.

Don Cæsar. And I from farther in the south.

Don Guritan. I'm furious!

Don Cæsar. Is it so? I am enraged!

Don Guritan. Twelve hundred leagues I've travelled!

Don Cæsar. I have done
Two thousand! Women fair, black, yellow, brown,
I've seen. To places blessed by Heaven I've been.
Algiers the happy town, and fair Tunis
Where one may see—such pleasant ways have Turks—
People impaled, hooked up above the doors.

Don Guritan. I have been played a trick.

Don Cæsar. And I've been sold.

Don Guritan. Almost exiled I was.

Don Cæsar. I almost hanged!

Don Guritan. To Neubourg cunningly they sent me off,
To bear these few words written in a box:

"Keep this old fool as long as possible."

Don Cæsar. [*Bursting out laughing.*] And who did this?

Don Guritan. But I will wring the neck
Of Cæsar de Bazan!

Don Cæsar. [*Gravely.*] Ah!

Don Guritan. And to crown
His insolence, he just now sent to me
A lackey to excuse himself, he said,
A serving man, but I refused to see
The varlet, and I made them lock him up.
Now to the master, Cæsar de Bazan,
I come! This most audacious traitor knave!
See now, I'll kill him! Where is he?

Don Cæsar. [*Still gravely.*] I'm he.

Don Guritan. You!—You are joking, sir?

Don Cæsar. I am Don Cæsar.

Don Guritan. What! This again!

Don Cæsar. Undoubtedly again!

Don Guritan. Leave off this play, you greatly weary me,
E'en if you think that you are droll.

Don Cæsar. And you
Amuse me much. You have to me the air
Of jealousy. Exceedingly, dear sir,
I pity you. The ills that come to us
From our own vices are more hard to bear
Than those which hap to us from others' sins.
I'd rather be—and so I've often said—
Quite poor than miserly, and be deceived
Rather than jealous. You are both. And now,
Upon my soul, I do to-night expect
Your wife.

Don Guritan. My wife!

Don Cæsar. Oh, yes, your wife!

Don Guritan. Come, now!
I am not married.

Don Cæsar. Yet you have stirred up
This riot! And you're not a married man!
For the last quarter of an hour you have
Assumed the husband's roar, or else the air

Of weeping tiger, so efficiently
That in simplicity I've given you
A heap of precious counsel seeming fit!
But if not married, why, by Hercules,
Have you thus made yourself ridiculous?

Don Guritan. Do you know, sir, that you exasperate me?

Don Cæsar. Pooh!

Don Guritan. This is too much!

Don Cæsar. Truly?

Don Guritan. Oh, but you
Shall pay for this!

Don Cæsar. [*Looking in a jeering manner at* Don Guritan's *feet, which are covered by waves of ribbon, according to the new fashion.*] In days gone by it was
That on the head were ribbons worn. I mark
That now—and 'tis an honest mode—they're placed
Upon the boot, and feet are thus adorned.
A charming thing!

Don Guritan. I see that we must fight!

Don Cæsar. [*With indifference.*] You think so?

Don Guritan. You're not Cæsar, that concerns
Myself; but I'll commence with you.

Don Cæsar. Good, good!
Take care with me to finish.

Don Guritan. [*Presenting one of the swords to him.*] Fop! At once.

Don Cæsar. [*Taking the sword.*] Immediately. When I've a chance to fight
I do not lose it!

Don Guritan. Where?

Don Cæsar. Behind the wall.
This street's deserted.

Don Guritan. [*Trying the point of his sword on the floor.*] As for Cæsar, ah!
I'll kill him afterward.

Don Cæsar. Indeed?

Don Guritan. Most surely!

Don Cæsar. [*Also making his sword bend.*] Pshaw! One of us dead, you I then defy

To kill Don Cæsar.

Don Guritan. Let us out!

[*They go out. The sound of their retreating steps is heard. A little concealed door opens in the right wall, and* DON SALLUSTE *enters by it.*

SCENE VI

Don Salluste. [*Dressed in a dark-green coat, almost black. He appears anxious and preoccupied. He looks about, and listens uneasily.*] There's naught
Prepared! [*Noticing the table covered with dishes.*
What means all this?
[*Hearing the noise of* CÆSAR'S *and* GURITAN'S *steps.*
What noise is that?
[*He walks about in reverie.*
This morning Gudiel saw the Page go out
And followed him.—Unto Don Guritan
He went.—I see not Ruy Blas. This Page——
O Satan! 'Tis some countermine! some word
Of faithful counsel, with the which he charged
Don Guritan for her!—And from the mutes
One can learn nothing! It is that! I had
Not counted on Don Guritan at all.

[*Enter* DON CÆSAR. *In his hand he carries the bare sword, which, on entering, he throws upon an arm-chair.*

SCENE VII

DON SALLUSTE, DON CÆSAR

Don Cæsar. [*From the threshold of the door.*] Ah, I was very sure! I see you then,
Old fiend!

Don Salluste. [*Turning round petrified.*] Don Cæsar.

Don Cæsar. [*Crossing his arms and bursting out laughing.*] You are weaving now
Some frightful scheme! But have I not disturbed
It all just now, by sprawling heavily
Into the midst of it?

Don Salluste. [*Aside.*] Oh, all is lost!

Don Cæsar. [*Laughing.*] Through all this morning have I come across
Your spider webs. Not one of all your plans
Is now unspoilt. I flung myself on them
At hazard; and the whole demolished I.
This is delightful!

Don Salluste. [*Aside.*] Demon! What can he
Have done?

Don Cæsar. [*Laughing louder and louder.*] The man you sent with money-bag
For purpose that you know, to whom you know. [*He laughs.*
What a good joke!

Don Salluste. What then?

Don Cæsar. I made him drunk.

Don Salluste. About the money that he had?

Don Cæsar. With it
I presents made to divers persons. Well,
We all have friends.

Don Salluste. You wrongly me suspect——

Don Cæsar. [*Rattling the money in his pockets.*] I first my pockets filled, you will believe. [*Laughs again.*
You understand? The lady!

Don Salluste. Oh!

Don Cæsar. [*Remarking his anxiety.*] You know—

[DON SALLUSTE *listens with redoubled anxiety.* DON CÆSAR *proceeds, laughing.*

She sent an old duenna—fearful wretch,
With sprouting beard and drunkard's ruddy nose——

Don Salluste. What for?

Don Cæsar. To quietly inquire if it
Were true—from prudence—that Don Cæsar here
Expected her to-night——

Don Salluste. [*Aside.*] Good Heavens! [*Aloud.* And what
Didst thou reply?

Don Cæsar. My master, I said yes!
That I awaited her.

Don Salluste. [*Aside.*] It may be all

Is not yet lost!

Don Cæsar. And last your swordsman fine,
Your captain, on the field he gave his name—
'Twas Guritan. [DON SALLUSTE *starts.*
This morning prudently
He would not see the lackey that was sent
With message from Don Cæsar, and he came
To me demanding satisfaction——

Don Salluste. Well,
And what didst thou?

Don Cæsar. I killed the goose-cap.

Don Salluste. Ah!
Indeed?

Don Cæsar. Yea, 'neath the wall he's dying now.

Don Salluste. Art sure he'll die?

Don Cæsar. I fear so.

Don Salluste. [*Aside.*] Oh, again
I breathe! By grace of Heaven! nothing he
Has yet disturbed! Quite otherwise. But let me
Be rid of him, this rough assistant, now!
The money—as for that, 'tis naught. [*Aloud.*] Your tale
Is very strange. And have you seen none else?

Don Cæsar. No soul. But soon I shall. I shall go on.
My name will cause sensation through the town.
I'll make a frightful scandal, you may rest
Assured.

Don Salluste. [*Aside.*] The devil!
[*Eagerly, and approaching* DON CÆSAR.
Money you may keep,
But leave this house.

Don Cæsar. Ah, yes, one knows your ways;
You'd have me followed! Then I should return—
Delightful destiny—to contemplate
Thy blue, O Sea Mediterranean!
Not I.

Don Salluste. Believe me.

Don Cæsar. No. Besides, within
This palace-prison some one is, I feel,
A prey to your dark treachery. All plots

Of courts have double ladders. On one side
Arms tied, and gloom, and troubled looks. By one
Ascends the suff'rer, by the other mounts
The executioner.—Now you must be
The headsman——of necessity.

Don Salluste. Oh! oh!

Don Cæsar. For me! I pull the ladder, and crack—down
It goes!

Don Salluste. I swear——

Don Cæsar. I will to spoil it all
Stay through th' adventure. Oh, I know you sharp
Enough, my subtle cousin, puppets two
Or three to hang up by one cord. Hold, now,
I'm one! and I will here remain!

Don Salluste. Hark, now——

Don Cæsar. To rhetoric! Ah! me you sold away
To Afric's pirates! Here you fabricate
Some Cæsar false! And thus you compromise
My name!

Don Salluste. Mere chance it was.

Don Cæsar. Mere chance! Excuse
That dish that rogues prepare for fools to gulp;
No chance was it. The worse for you if plans
Break through. But I intend to succour those
Whom you'd destroy. I shall cry out my name
From the housetops.

[*He climbs on the window supports and looks out.*

Now wait! Here is good luck!
The Alguazils are 'neath the window now.

[*He passes his arm through the bars and shakes them, crying out,*

Halloa!

Don Salluste. [*Aside, and terrified, at the front of the stage.*]
All's lost if he be recognised!

[*The* Alguazils *enter, preceded by an* Alcaid. Don Salluste *appears in great perplexity.* Don Cæsar *goes toward the* Alcaid *with an air of triumph.*

SCENE VIII

The SAME, *an* ALCAID, *and the* ALGUAZILS

Don Cæsar. [*To the* ALCAID.] You, in your warrant, will take down——

Don Salluste. [*Pointing to* DON CÆSAR.] That this Man is the famous robber Matalobos!

Don Cæsar. [*Amazed.*] How!

Don Salluste. [*Aside.*] All I gain, if I but gain a day.

[*To the* ALCAID.

This man in shining daylight dares to come
Into our houses.—Seize the thief!

[*The* ALGUAZILS *seize* DON CÆSAR *by the collar.*

Don Cæsar. [*Furious, to* DON SALLUSTE.] Pardon!
You lie outrageously!

The Alcaid. Who was it, then,
That called us?

Don Salluste. It was I.

Don Cæsar. By Heaven, now!
That's bold!

The Alcaid. Be still! I think he's right.

Don Cæsar. But list,
I am Don Cæsar de Bazan himself!

Don Salluste. Don Cæsar! If you please, examine now
His mantle—you will find that Salluste's writ
Beneath the collar. 'Tis a mantle which
Just now he stole from me.

[*The* ALGUAZILS *snatch off the mantle, and the* ALCAID *examines it.*

The Alcaid. Quite right—'tis so.

Don Salluste. The doublet that he wears——

Don Cæsar. [*Aside.*] Accursèd Salluste!

Don Salluste. [*Continuing.*] Belongs to the Count d'Albe; it was from him
He stole it.

[*Showing an escutcheon embroidered on the facing of the left sleeve.*

And whose 'scutcheon you behold!

Don Cæsar. [*Aside.*] Bewitched he must be!

The Alcaid. [*Examining the blazon.*] Ah, yes—yes; here are
The castles two, in gold——
Don Salluste. Also you'll see
Two caldrons, Henriquez and Guzman.
[*In struggling,* DON CÆSAR *has let fall some doubloons from his pockets.* DON SALLUSTE *points out to the* ALCAID *the manner in which they were filled.*
There!
Is that the way that money's borne about
By honest men?
The Alcaid. [*Shaking his head.*] Ahem!
Don Cæsar. [*Aside.*] I'm caught!
The Alcaid. Here are
Some papers.
Don Cæsar. [*Aside.*] Ah, they're found! Oh, oh, the poor
Love-letters saved through all my scrapes?
The Alcaid. [*Examining the papers.*] Letters——
What's this?—in different hands are they——
Don Salluste. [*Making him observe the directions.*] But all
Directed to the count.
The Alcaid. Yes.
Don Cæsar. But——
The Alcaid. [*Tying his hands.*] Caught now!
What luck!
An Alguazil. [*Entering to the* ALCAID.] Outside, my lord, a man has just
Been killed.
The Alcaid. Who is the murderer?
Don Salluste. [*Pointing to* DON CÆSAR.] 'Tis he.
Don Cæsar. [*Aside.*] The duel! Oh, that senseless freak!
Don Salluste. Ah, when
He entered, in his hand he had a sword,
And there it is.
The Alcaid. [*Examining the sword.*] And blood upon it! Ah!
[*To* DON CÆSAR.
There—go with them.
Don Salluste. [*To* DON CÆSAR, *whom the* ALGUAZILS *are taking away.*] To Matalobos now.

Good-evening.

Don Cæsar. [*Making a step toward him and looking at him fixedly.*] Earth's vilest scoundrel you!

ACT V—THE TIGER AND THE LION

SCENE I.—THE SAME ROOM. IT IS NIGHT. A LAMP IS ON THE TABLE. AT THE RISING OF THE CURTAIN RUY BLAS IS ALONE. HE IS DRESSED IN A LONG BLACK ROBE, WHICH CONCEALS HIS OTHER VESTMENTS

RUY BLAS. [*Alone.*] 'Tis ended now. The dream—the vision—all
Has passed away. All day till eve I've walked
Haphazard through the streets. Just now I've hope.
I'm calm. At night the head is less disturbed
By noise, and one reflects the better then.
Naught too alarming in these darkened walls
I see; the furniture is 'ranged; the keys
Are in the locks; the mutes sleep overhead;
The house is truly very still. Oh, yes,
There is no reason for alarm. All things
Proceed quite well. My Page all faithful is.
Don Guritan is sure to stir himself
For her. O God! May I not thank Thee now,
Just God, for suff'ring that advice to reach
Her ears? Thou, gracious God, hast aided me,
'Tis Thou hast helped me to protect and save
This angel, and defeat Don Salluste. Oh,
May she have naught to fear, and naught, alas!
To suffer; and may she be ever saved!
And oh, that I may die!

[*He draws from his bosom a little vial, which he places on the table.*

Yes, perish now,
Despised! and sink into the grave! Yes, die

As one should die, who seeks to expiate
A crime! Die in this dwelling, wretched, vile,
And lone!
[*He throws open the black robe, under which is seen the livery which he wore in the first act.*
Die with thy livery beneath
Thy winding-sheet! Oh, if the demon comes
To see his victim dead,
[*He pushes a piece of furniture to barricade the secret door.*
He shall at least
Not enter by this horrid door! [*He comes back to the table.*
'Tis sure
The Page has spoken to Don Guritan,
It was not eight o'clock this morn. [*He gazes on the vial.*
For me
I have condemned myself, and now prepare
My execution—on my head I shall
Myself let fall the tomb's so heavy lid.
At least I have the comfort certainly
To know there is no help. My fall must be.
[*Sinking into the arm-chair.*
And yet she loved me! O God, help me now!
I've not the courage! [*He weeps.*
Oh! he might in peace
Have left us! [*He hides his face in his hands and sobs.*
O my God!
[*Raising his head, as if distraught, and looking at the vial.*
The man who sold
Me this asked me what day o' the month it was.
I could not tell. My head's confused. Oh, men
Are cruel. You may die, and none will care.
I suffer.—Me she loved!—To know things past
Can never be restored! And to behold
Her nevermore! Her hand that I have pressed!
Her lips that touched my brow—— Angel adored!
Poor angel! There is need to die, and die
Despairing! Oh, her dress, the folds of which
Each one had grace, her footstep that had power

To stir my soul when it passed by, her eyes
That did intoxicate mine own still all
Irresolute, her smile, her voice—— and I
Shall see her, hear her never more. Is this
Then possible? Oh, never!

[*In anguish he stretches out his hand to the vial; at the moment when he seizes it convulsively the door at the back opens. The* QUEEN *appears dressed in white, with a dark mantle, the hood of which having fallen back on her shoulders, shows her pale face. She carries in her hand a dark lantern, which she places on the floor and walks rapidly toward* RUY BLAS.

SCENE II

RUY BLAS, *the* QUEEN

The Queen. [*Entering.*] Don Cæsar!

Ruy Blas. [*Turning round with a frightened gesture, and closing hurriedly the robe which had hidden his livery.*] O God! 'tis she! In a most horrid snare
She's taken! [*Aloud.*] Madam!——

The Queen. Cæsar! What a cry
Of fright——

Ruy Blas. Who was it told you to come here?

The Queen. Thyself.

Ruy Blas. Oh, how?

The Queen. I have received from you——

Ruy Blas. [*Breathless.*] Speak, quick!

The Queen. A note.

Ruy Blas. From me!

The Queen. By your own hand
Indited.

Ruy Blas. This is but to dash one's brow
Against the wall! But, oh, I have not writ—
Of that I'm very sure!

The Queen. [*Drawing from her bosom a letter, which she gives him.*] Read—read it, then.

[RUY BLAS *takes the letter eagerly, and bends toward the lamp to read it.*

Ruy Blas. [*Reading.*] "A danger terrible environs me;
My Queen alone can stay the tempest's force——"

[*He looks at the letter as if in a stupor and unable to read further.*

The Queen. [*Continuing, and pointing with her finger to the lines as she reads.*] "By coming to my house this night. If not, I'm lost."

Ruy Blas. [*In a stifled voice.*] What treason! Oh, that letter!

The Queen. [*Continuing to read.*] "Come
To the door that's at the end of th' avenue;
At night you'll not be recognised. And one
Who is devoted will be there to ope
The door."

Ruy Blas. [*Aside.*] This note I had forgotten.

[*To the* Queen, *in a terrible voice.*

Go
Away!

The Queen. I'll go, Don Cæsar. You are cruel!
My God! What have I done?

Ruy Blas. Good Heavens! What?
You ruin and destroy yourself!

The Queen. But how?

Ruy Blas. Explain I can not. Fly—fly quick!

The Queen. This morn
I for your safety did precaution take,
And a duenna sent——

Ruy Blas. O God! but now
As from a heart that bleeds, I feel your life
In streams is running out.—Go—go!

The Queen. [*As if struck by a sudden idea.*] Inspired
I am by that devotion which my love
Suggests. Oh, you approach some dreadful hour,
And would remove me from the danger now!
But I remain!

Ruy Blas. Oh, what sublimity!
What thoughtfulness!—O God! to thus remain
At such an hour in such a place!

The Queen. From you
The letter really came. And thus——

Ruy Blas. [*Raising his arms to heaven in despair.*] O Power Divine!

The Queen. You wish me gone.

Ruy Blas. [*Taking her hands.*] Oh, understand!

The Queen. I do. Upon the moment's spur you wrote,
And after——

Ruy Blas. Unto thee I have not writ.
I am a demon. Fly! Ah! it is thou,
Poor child, who lead'st thyself into the snare!
Ah! it is true, and hell on every side
Besieges thee! Then nothing can I find
That will persuade thee? Listen—understand;
I love thee well, thou know'st. To save thy mind
From what is imaged, I would pluck my heart
From out my body. Go thou!

The Queen. Don Cæsar——

Ruy Blas. Go—go! But I remember, some one must
Have opened to you?

The Queen. Yes.

Ruy Blas. O Satan! Who?

The Queen. One in a mask—and hidden by the wall.

Ruy Blas. What said the man? what was his figure—say?
Oh, was he tall? Who was he? Speak, I wait!

[*A man in black, and masked, appears at the door at the back.*

The Masked Man. 'Twas I!

[*He takes off his mask. It is* DON SALLUSTE. *The* QUEEN *and* RUY BLAS *recognise him with terror.*

SCENE III

RUY BLAS, *the* QUEEN, DON SALLUSTE

Ruy Blas. Great God! Fly, madam, fly!

Don Salluste. There is
No longer time. Madam de Neubourg now
Has ceased to be the Queen of Spain.

The Queen. [*Horrified.*] Don Salluste!

Don Salluste. [*Pointing to* RUY BLAS.] That man's companion you henceforth must be.

The Queen. Great God! ah, yes, it is indeed a snare!
Don Cæsar——
Ruy Blas. [*Despairingly.*] Madam, what, alas! is it
You've done?
Don Salluste. [*Moving slowly toward the* Queen.] I hold you here.—But I will speak
Without offence unto your Majesty,
For without wrath am I.—I find you here—
Now listen, do not let us make a stir—
At midnight, in Don Cæsar's room alone.
This fact, if public—for a queen—would be
Enough at Rome the marriage to annul.
And promptly would the Holy Father be
Informed of it.—But by consent the thing
Could be concealed.
[*He draws from his pocket a parchment, which he unrolls and presents to the* Queen.
Sign me this letter then
Unto his Majesty our King. I will
Send it by hand of the grand equerry
To the chief notary, and afterward—
A carriage, where I've placed a heap of gold
[*Pointing outside.*
Is there—set out the two of you at once.
I help you. Be not anxious; you can go
Toledo way by Alcantare—so
Reach Portugal. Go where you will—to us
It is the same. We'll shut our eyes.—Obey!
I swear that I alone as yet am 'ware
Of the adventure; but if you refuse,
Madrid to-morrow shall know everything.
Let us be calm. I hold you in my hand.
[*Pointing to the table on which is an inkstand.*
Madam, for writing, what you need is there.
The Queen. [*Overwhelmed, falling into an arm-chair.*] I'm in his power!
Don Salluste. From you I only ask
This acquiescence signed, for me to send
To the King.

[*Whispering to* RUY BLAS, *who listens motionless and thunderstruck.*

Let me alone; it is for thee
I work. [*To the* QUEEN.] Sign now.

The Queen. [*Aside, trembling.*] What can I do?

Don Salluste. [*Leaning over her, whispering in her ear, and presenting a pen.*] There, now!
What is a crown? You happiness will gain,
Though you may lose a throne. My people all
Remain outside. They nothing know of this;
All passes here between us three.

[*Trying to put the pen between the* QUEEN'S *fingers, she neither taking nor rejecting it.*

Well, now,

[*The* QUEEN, *distraught and undecided, looks at him with anguish.*

If you sign not you strike the blow yourself—
The scandal and the cloister!

The Queen. [*Overwhelmed.*] O my God!

Don Salluste. [*Pointing to* RUY BLAS.] Don Cæsar loves you.
He is worthy you;
Upon my honour he is nobly born;
Almost a prince. Lord of a donjon keep
With walls embattled, holding fee of lands.
He is the Duke d'Olmedo—Count Bazan,
Grandee of Spain——

[*He pushes to the parchment the hand of the* QUEEN, *who, trembling and dismayed, seems ready to sign.*

Ruy Blas. [*As if suddenly awakening.*] My name is Ruy Blas,
And I a lackey am!

[*Snatching the pen from the hand of the* QUEEN, *and the parchment, which he tears.*

Madam, sign not!—
At last!—I suffocate!

The Queen. Oh, what says he?
Don Cæsar!

Ruy Blas. [*Letting his robe fall, and showing himself in livery without a sword.*] Yes, my name is Ruy Blas.
I am the servant of that man! [*Turning to* DON SALLUSTE.] I say

There's been enough of treason, and that I
Refuse my happiness!—Oh, thanks!—You thought
That you did well to whisper in my ear!
I say that it is time that I at last
Should waken, though I'm strangled in your web
Of hideous plots—and I no further step
Will go. I say we two together make,
My lord, a pair that's infamous. I have
The clothing of a lackey—you the soul!

Don Salluste. [*To the* QUEEN, *coldly.*] This man indeed my servant is. [*To* RUY BLAS, *with authority.*
Not one
Word more!

The Queen. [*Letting a cry of despair escape her, and wringing her hands.*] Just Heaven!

Don Salluste. [*Continuing.*] Only he spoke too soon.
[*He crosses his arms, and holds himself up, speaking with a voice of thunder.*
Well—yes! now 'tis for me to tell it all.
It matters not, my vengeance in its way
Is all complete. [*To the* QUEEN.
What think you? On my word,
Madrid will laugh! You ruined me! and you
I have dethroned. You banished me, and now
I boast of driving you away. Ha, ha!
You offered me for wife your waiting-maid!
[*Bursting into laughter.*
My lackey I for lover give to you.
You can espouse him certainly. The King
Sinks fast!—A lover's heart will be your wealth. [*He laughs.*
You will have made him duke, that you might be
His duchess! [*Grinding his teeth.*
Ah! you blighted, ruined me,
And trampled me beneath your feet, and yet—
And yet you slept in peace! Fool that you were!
[*While he has been speaking* RUY BLAS *has gone to the door at the back and fastened it; then he has approached him by soft steps from behind, without having been perceived. At the moment when* DON SALLUSTE *fin-*

ishes, fixing his eyes, full of hatred and triumph, on the annihilated QUEEN, RUY BLAS *seizes the sword of the* MARQUIS *by the hilt, and draws it out swiftly.*

Ruy Blas. [*With the sword of* DON SALLUSTE *in his hand.*]
I say you have insulted now your Queen!
[DON SALLUSTE *rushes toward the door.* RUY BLAS *bars the way.*
—Oh, go not there! 'tis not worth while; long since
I fastened it. Marquis, until to-day,
Satan protected thee; but if he will
From my hands pluck thee, let him show himself.
—'Tis my turn now!—When we a serpent meet,
It must be crushed. No one can enter here.
No, not thy people, and not hell! Beneath
Mine iron heel I hold thee foaming now!
—This man spoke insolently to you, madam!
I will explain. He has no human soul.
A monster he. With gibings yesterday
He suffocated me. He crushed my heart,
For his mere pleasure. Oh, he bade me close
A window, and he martyrized me then!
I prayed—I wept—I can not tell you all. [*To the* MARQUIS.
In these last moments you have counted o'er
Your wrongs. I shall not answer your complaints.
Besides, I comprehend them not. But you,
O wretch! you dare your Queen to outrage now
—Woman adorable—while I am by!
Hold! for a clever man, in truth you much
Astonish me! And you imagine, too,
That I shall see you do it, and say naught!
But listen—whatsoe'er his sphere, my lord,
When a vile, trait'rous, tortuous scoundrel strange
And monstrous acts commits, noble or churl,
All men have right, in coming on his path,
To splutter out his sentence to his face,
And take a sword, a knife, a hatchet— Oh,
By Heaven! to be a lackey! When I should
The headsman be!

The Queen. You do not mean to kill
This man?
Ruy Blas. Madam, I am ashamed, indeed,
That I my duty must accomplish here;
But this affair must all be stifled now.
[*He pushes* Don Salluste *toward the closet.*
'Tis settled. Go you there, my lord, and pray.
Don Salluste. It is assassination!
Ruy Blas. Think you so?
Don Salluste. [*Unarmed, and looking around him with rage.*]
Nothing upon these walls! No arms! [*To* Ruy Blas.
A sword,
At least!
Ruy Blas. Marquis, you jest! What! Master! is't
That I am a gentleman? a duel! fie!
One of thy servants am I, in galloon
And red, a knave to be chastised and whipped,
And one who kills! Yes, I shall kill you, sir—
Believe you it?—as villain infamous!
As craven! as a dog!
The Queen. Have mercy on him!
Ruy Blas. [*To the* Queen, *and seizing the* Marquis.] Madam,
each one takes vengeance for himself.
The demon can not any longer be
Saved by an angel!
The Queen. [*Kneeling.*] Mercy!
Don Salluste. [*Calling for help.*] Murder! help!
Ruy Blas. [*Raising the sword.*] How soon will you have done?
Don Salluste. [*Throwing himself on* Ruy Blas.] Demon! I die
By murder!
Ruy Blas. [*Pushing him into the closet.*] No, in rightful punishment!
[*They disappear in the cabinet, the door of which closes on them.*
The Queen. [*Alone, and falling half dead into the arm-chair.*]
O Heavens!
[*A moment of silence.* Ruy Blas *re-enters, pale and without the sword.*

SCENE IV

The QUEEN, RUY BLAS

[RUY BLAS *totters a few steps toward the* QUEEN, *who remains motionless and as if frozen. Then he falls on both knees, his eyes fixed on the ground, as if he dared not raise them to her.*

Ruy Blas. [*In a grave, low voice.*] Now, madam, must I speak to you.
But I will not come near. I frankly speak.
I'm not as guilty as you think I am.
I know my treason, as to you it seems,
Must horrible appear. Oh, to explain
It is not easy. Yet not base my soul—
At heart I'm honest. 'Tis this love which has
Destroyed me. Not that I defend myself,
For well I know I should have found some means
T' escape. The sin is consummated now!
But all the same, I've loved you truly well.

The Queen. Sir——

Ruy Blas. [*Still on his knees.*] Fear not. I will not approach. Yet would
I to your Majesty from step to step
The whole declare. Believe I am not vile!
To-day—all day I paced about the town
Like one possessed. Often the people looked
At me. And near the 'spital that by you
Was founded, vaguely did I feel, athwart
My brain delirious, that silently
A woman of the crowd did wipe away
The sweat from off my brow. Have mercy, God!
My heart is broken!

The Queen. What is't you wish?

Ruy Blas. [*Joining his hands.*] That, madam, you would pardon me!

The Queen. Never.

Ruy Blas. Never! [*He rises, and walks slowly toward the table.* Very sure?

The Queen. No, never—never!

Ruy Blas. [*He takes the vial that was placed on the table, carries it to his lips, and empties it at one draught.*] Sad flame, extinguished be!

The Queen. [*Rising and rushing to him.*] What have you done?

Ruy Blas. [*Showing the vial.*] Nothing. My woes are ended. Nothing. You
Curse me—and I bless you. There—that is all.

The Queen. [*Overcome.*] Don Cæsar!

Ruy Blas. When I think, poor angel, that
You loved me!

The Queen. Oh, what was that philter strange?
What have you done? Speak—answer—tell to me!
I do forgive and love thee, Cæsar. I
Believe in thee.

Ruy Blas. My name is Ruy Blas.

The Queen. [*Throwing her arms round him.*] I do forgive thee, Ruy Blas. But speak,
Say what it is you've done? 'Tis my command!
That frightful draught—it was not poison? Say?

Ruy Blas. Yes; it was poison. But my heart is glad.
[*Holding the* QUEEN *in his arms and raising his eyes to heaven.*
Permit, O God!—the Sovereign Justice Thou—
That the poor lackey pours out blessings on
This Queen, who did console his tortured heart
By—in his life—her love, and pity gives
In death.

The Queen. Poison! O God! 'tis I—'tis I
Have killed thee! Ah, I love thee! If I had
But pardoned!

Ruy Blas. [*Sinking.*] I had done the same.
[*His voice fails. The* QUEEN *supports him.*
I could
No longer live! Adieu! [*Pointing to the door.*
Fly hence, and all
Will secret be. I die. [*He falls.*

The Queen. [*Throwing herself on his body.*] Ruy Blas!

Ruy Blas. [*At the point of death, rousing himself at his name pronounced by the* QUEEN.] I thank thee!

THE END

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